

## AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

David Adams is Professor of American Studies at the University of Keele.  
 Kenneth Andrews's books include *The Spanish Caribbean*, 1978, and *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, 1984. He is Professor of History at the University of Hull.  
 Patricia Beer's most recent book of poems is *The Lie of the Land*, 1983.  
 Rupert Christiansen's *Prima Donna* was published in 1984.  
 Steven Collins is a lecturer in the Study of Religions at the University of Bristol. He is co-editor, with Michael Carruthers and J. Steven Lakes, of *The Category of the Person*, 1985.  
 Tini Dooley's collection of poems, *The Interrupted Dream: Poems 1971-1984*, was published in 1985.  
 George M. Fredrickson is Edgar E. Robinson Professor of United States History at Stanford University. His publications include *White Supremacy: A comparative study in American and South African history*, 1981.  
 Warwick Gould is the editor of the *Year's Annual*.  
 Julian Graffy is a lecturer in Russian at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London.  
 John A. C. Greppin is Professor of Linguistics at Cleveland State University.  
 Simon Karlicky is Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Berkeley.  
 Richard King teaches in the Department of American Studies at the University of Nottingham.  
 Eric Kuen is an antiquarian bookseller in London.  
 Hermione Lee's books include *The Mulberry Tree: Writings of Elizabeth Bowen*, 1986. She teaches English at the University of York, and presents the television programme *Book Fair*.  
 Ian H. Mackinnon's poems appeared in *New Chute Poets*, 1986.  
 Michael Mallett is Professor of History at the University of Warwick. He is co-author, with Sir John Hale, of *The Military Organisation of a Renaissance State: Venice, c.1400-1617*, 1984.

David Matthews is a composer. He collaborated with Deryck Cooke on his performing edition of Mahler's Tenth Symphony.  
 Barbara Stoler Miller teaches in the Department of Oriental Studies at Barnard College, New York.  
 Jill Neville's most recent novel is *Last Ferry to Manly*, 1985.  
 Jay Parini's novel, *Patch Boys*, was published last year. His collection of poems, *Anthracite County*, appeared in 1982.  
 Sir Brian Pippard is Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of Cambridge, and the author of *The Physics of Vibration*, 1978 and 1982.  
 Keith Potter is Senior Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths' College, University of London.  
 Richard Proudfoot is General Editor of the Arden Shakespeare.  
 Michael Pye is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Marburg, West Germany.  
 N. A. M. Radger is Honorary Secretary of the Navy Records Society, and an Assistant Keeper in the Public Record Office. His *The Wooden World: An anatomy of the Georgian navy* was published earlier this year.  
 Vivian Salmon is a lecturer in English at Keele College, Oxford. Her edition of *The Works of Francis Lyoff* was published in 1972.  
 Roger Scruton is Professor of Philosophy at Birkbeck College, University of London.  
 Dan Segal is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.  
 T. A. Shippey is Professor of English Language and Medieval Literature at the University of Leeds.  
 Virginia Llewellyn Smith is the author of *Anatoli Chekhov and the Lady with the Dog*, 1973.  
 Matthew Sweeney's latest collection of poems, *The Lane Waltzer*, was published in 1985.  
 Tony Tanner is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. His *Jane Austen* appeared last year.

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### CLAUDE RAWSON

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TLS Editors

Among this week's contributors

Author/Auditor

Fifty years on

Books reviewed

Information please

Cover picture

A detail from Harriet Hosmer's "Winter", 1911, a portrait of Miss Theodosia Townsend, which is to show in the exhibition *Women Artists: From the eighteenth century to the present day* at the National Gallery of Ireland, the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin, and the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, until the end of August.

## A question of potency

Claude Rawson

In April 1934, at the age of sixty-eight, Yeats was "rejuvenated" into what he called his "second puberty". This was effected not by monkey glands but by vasectomy, then thought to be a way of increasing the male hormone and restoring virility. Yeats had been complaining of both physical and sexual impotence, and connected the one with the other. As the late Richard Ellmann says in *W. B. Yeats's Second Puberty*, a delightful lecture delivered on or close to the fiftieth anniversary of the event and reprinted in *Four Dubliners* [details overleaf], "Verse-making and love-making had always made connections in his mind".

When Yeats underwent Steinach's operation, he did so with an unusually literal sense of these connections. Analogies between poetic and sexual potency were not unusual among early modernist masters, where they occur in forms which range from something closely resembling common maelstrom (in Pound sometimes, or Hemingway) to Wallace Stevens's elaborate exercises in metaphorical or paramephorical erotomania on the subject of interior paramours. Some poems ("Le Monocle de Mon Oncle", *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*) explored the connection in both its positive and negative forms.

The negative forms probably derive from the Laforgerian/Prufrockian model, which is an inverse rather than negative example. In the poems by Stevens and Pound, sexual inadequacy and poetic feebleness appear as reflections or symptoms of one another. In the Laforgerian version sexual enervation had been seen not (or not mainly) as a correlative to poetical sterility, but as generating its own specific lyricisms. The pose involved an air of middle-aged weariness in poets writing in their twenties. In Eliot, as in Laforger, a kind of ironic exultation in such non-correlations. The impoverished sexuality is projected with a plangent triumphalism that is almost boastful. It is unlike the sexual debility of Rochester's disabled debauchee, which intimates a prowess in sexual excess, but comes over as a poetic potency actually energized by neuroathetic ineffectuality rather than merely surviving them.

When Stevens or Pound created Prufrockian characters, they did so satirically, reverting to the more direct equation. In January 1918, eleven months before the publication of Stevens's "Le Monocle" and two years before

*Mauberley*, Yeats was settling with the Communicators the placing of Thomas Carlyle in the 7th Phase of the Moon, a placing which survived into the published texts of *A Vision* (1925, 1937). The devastating judgment finally formulated in the book,

He neither could, nor should have cared for anything but the personalities of history, but he used them as so many metaphors in a vast popular rhetoric, for the expression of thoughts that seemed his own and were the work of preachers to angry ignorant congregations. So noisy, so threatening that rhetoric, so great his own energy that two generations passed before men noticed that he had written no sentence not of coarse humour that clings to the memory.

is followed by a remark about Carlyle's sexuality:

Sexual impotence had doubtless weakened the *Body of Fate* and so strengthened the *False Mask*, yet no doubt if any more plaster of ant's eggs could have helped where there was so great insincerity.

There seem to have been conflicting traditions as to whether ant's eggs were supposed to increase potency or restrain lust. But it's clear that when Yeats says that even ant's eggs won't help Carlyle, he's not denying the parallel between sexual and literary failure. His point is that Carlyle's case is so hopeless that he couldn't write well even if his impotence were cured.

Ironically it was precisely such a cure, even more radically physical, that Yeats himself sought in 1934. The fact seems startling, because although the analogies of poets in this matter doubtless have biographical implications, we expect these to be more intricate and elusive, and assume that the proponents of such mythologized interconnections don't usually offer them as straightforward laws of nature or simple projections of biographical fact. Yeats at this time was prepared to make the gesture and he did so with a literalizing imperiousness that has something of the flavour of his quizzical arrogant verse. Faced with a crisis of imaginative and erotic power, he went for the surgical solution, becoming perhaps the only major writer in the history of Romantic "dejections" to seek renewal in such a reductively biological way.

The result was the "second puberty". It did and didn't work. The satirical scenario sketched out for Carlyle was enacted in reverse. The poetry revived, becoming more vigorous and sensuous perhaps than it had ever been, but phallic restoration was more elusive. Yeats sought sexual intimacy with several women but, as Ellmann was reliably informed,

"he could not have erections".

The Steinach operation evidently provided the change of self necessary to create a new style, though the precise outcome differed from expectation and showed that connections between sexuality and poetry were no more simple in Yeats's case than in anyone else's. Yeats might feel too that his new passionate poems were the appropriate antithetical complement to impotence. In the manner codified



long ago in "Ego Dominus Tuus". It seems clear at all events that if the "connections" faltered in fact he seemed determined to sexualize his poetry by fiat. The later poetry has, as everyone knows, an excited sexual assertiveness, a defiant vitalism in old age, a reactivated extravagance of imagination. Signs of this can already be discerned as early as "The Tower" (1926), but the overcoming of Romantic "dejection" seems to require that certain continuities should be seen as renewals. Ellmann speaks of a new "explicitness", with Yeats projecting himself as "a wild old wicked man", "a foolish passionate man": "Long before Yeats had been bold enough to speak of 'the worse devil that is between my thighs,' but now . . . he talks even more explicitly of 'the lover's rod and his buttock head'". Some of this sounds depressingly like Dylan Thomas, perhaps be-

cause it's where Thomas took it from, and Ellmann's own evidence suggests that the forms are less of an innovation than he says, astonishing though the *Last Poems* are as a flowering of poetic energy in old age.

The two versions of *A Vision* (1925, 1937) were published on either side of the second puberty, though only some of the new material in the B-version is new material, bemused readers trying to decode Yeats's lunar system won't be quick to register the change. Ellmann identifies it in the later version's treatment of the work's autobiographical trappings. It has always been known that this occult "explanation of life" was set in motion in October 1917 during the Yeateses' honeymoon, when the newly married Mrs Yeats became the medium for messages from Communicators which she set out to record in automatic script. This may have been a stratagem to divert her husband from a "great gloom". He had unsuccessfully proposed marriage to Maud Gonne and then to her daughter Isolt, and his new wife may have been anxious to arouse his interest. It worked. Yeats's rheumatic pains disappeared, he felt happier, and was indeed interested: the couple went on to collaborate in 450 sittings over two and a half years, with Yeats asking the questions and Mrs Yeats recording the answers. There were some 3,600 pages of this, with additional material, including a card life, in which Yeats codified the research, eventually distilling it into the published book.

George Mills Harper's *The Making of Yeats's "A Vision"* is the fullest account of this prehistory. It is not an edition of the raw data, which will follow (the first two months are already available, according to the latest volume of *Yeats: An annual*, in a doctoral dissertation completed under Harper's supervision in 1982). How serious Mrs Yeats was is unclear. Harper thinks that whatever her initial purposes, she became "convinced that she was the instrument" for conveying "supernatural truths", and we should not be surprised to find in the ensuing spiritual transactions that Yeats's sense of the "connections" between "verse-making and love-making" had occult as well as practical dimensions. Harper's narrative reveals that on May 28, 1919,

Upon being told that "pure energy is the source of the unique", Yeats connected pure energy with the sexual act . . . he jumped logically to a series of questions concerning "what moment of sexual act . . . energy attain[s] its greatest purity". After some embarrassingly explicit answers about the moment

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# The graves of academe

Kenneth Minogue

ALLAN BLOOM  
The Closing of the American Mind: How higher education has failed democracy and impoverished the souls of today's students.  
392pp. Simon and Schuster. £14.95.  
0671-779913

Early in *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom tells us that the undergraduates he teaches arrive at the university equipped with one unshakable conviction: that truth is relative. All the influences upon them agree about the relativity of values, and no point of view is better than any other. The old idea of a liberal education has turned insensibly into an education for liberals. The aim is perhaps to release the young from their prejudices; the actual consequence, Bloom argues, has been to spread shallowness and apathy.

*The Closing of the American Mind* explores this situation in depth. It is a book hard to classify, because it mixes Bloom's own experiences teaching in American universities with philosophical argument, sociological generalization with the history of ideas. Moving from level to level, it steadily reveals itself as something immensely more ambitious than mere jeremiad about the deficiencies of youth: it is nothing less than an attempt to chart the crisis of Western civilization. In particular, it focuses on the way in which nineteenth-century German philosophy has taken possession of American culture. So dramatic a thesis no doubt accounts for the book's success in the United States; yet as an analysis of the character of modernity, it is also relevant to European experience.

Bloom finds something very wrong with contemporary intellectual and academic culture, whose grand shibboleth of criticism, he contends, has paradoxically produced intolerance and dogmatism. His exploration of the paradoxes of contemporary liberalism is the most fully elaborated yet to appear. His focus is, however, not merely on the history of ideas, but particularly on ideas in political philosophy. In Bloom's historic landscape, a work like Machiavelli's *Prince* is far more important than the French Revolution, which was largely the outcome of an ill-considered philosophical project. His intellectual elitism is just as thorough-going as the Marxism which he sees as having begun to destroy the university in the 1960s.

Bloom's account of the shallow intellectuality of the average American undergraduate is hair-raising. He believes that restraints on sex are pre-eminent among the moral points of view which have been reduced to the democracy of values. Consequently, as in all liberalisms, sex has been devalued; even tamod and banal sex now finds itself subjected to feminist imperatives to destroy the attraction between the sexes. He also argues persuasively that popular music, the dominant preoccupation of the young, is a narcotic which cuts them off from each other no less than from their elders.

Much of what Bloom has to say about today's undergraduates has been said before, usually by people who explain it in terms of commercialism, television, the collapse of family values and so on. Bloom puts it all down to bad philosophy. The real culprit is not so much Marx or Max Weber, whose value-relativism was translated into the American patois of "lifestyles", and came to be echoed in numberless popular books and movies. Thus he remarks that Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* was "just Dale Carnegie with a bit of middle-European cultural whipped cream on top". Woody Allen Americanized Continental nihilism for the movies. Much of this argument can be encapsulated in Bloom's image of the beaming face of Louis Armstrong as he sang "Mack the Knife" seemingly unaware that he was expressing a form of pseudo-masochistic nihilism popularized under the Weimar republic.

Our stars are singing a song they do not understand, translated from a German original and having a huge popular success with unknown but wide-ranging consequences, as something of the original message touches something in American souls. But behind it all, the master triad is Nietzsche and Heidegger. American, he argues, dance unwittingly to the tune of German philosophers, and the tune

conveys that no one set of values is better than any other. A shallow contentment is the current result. It is illustrated by an Atlanta taxi driver Bloom cites who, having been released from prison for drug-peddling, had undergone all kinds of therapy: "But what I liked best was Gestalt". The very use of the German word provokes Bloom to remark that such cultural tokens have become as natural as chewing-gum on American streets, and he continues:

He said he had found his identity and learned to like himself. A generation earlier he would have found God and learned to despise himself as a sinner. The problem lay with his sense of self, not with any original sin or devils in him. We have here the peculiarly American way of digesting Continental despair. It is nihilism with a happy ending.

To understand what is really happening to America, one must go back to Heidegger and Nietzsche. It was Nietzsche who criticized democracy as a world in which, since nobody actually believes in anything any more, everyone spends his life in frenzied work and frenzied play so as not to face the fact, not to look into the abyss.

This is "philosophy" criticizing "democracy" and no one can understand Bloom's drift who does not quickly realize that, in him, these and other terms have special meanings. "Democracy" describes what Tocqueville studied as the culture of the Americans, but its dominant sense derives from Plato's *Republic*, where it stands for a necessarily unstable form of social life which has rejected all forms of discrimination between the better and the worse. The other essential key lies in realizing that by "philosophy" Bloom means not what is taught in most professional departments of philosophy, but the moral and intellectual tradition whose great hero and martyr was Socrates. Philosophy is the discovery, traditionally first made by Thales (who fell into a well because he was looking at the stars) that the world is intelligible. This is an exhilarating discovery because it can liberate the mind from dependence upon

## The perfect and the perfected

Barbara Goodwin

KRISHAN KUMAR  
Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times  
506pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £24.50.  
0631-148736

Krishan Kumar's *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* is a rich compilation of his reflections on and his sociological knowledge of industrial society. He approaches utopia as a historian of ideas. No grand theory emerges in the book and, given the diversity of utopias, perhaps only the vaguest grand theory is possible, such as Bloch's "principle of hope". But Kumar composes an elaborate jigsaw of modern hopes and fears, juxtaposing many post-Enlightenment developments - rationalism, science, technology, mass production, planning, the growth of conglomerates, the rise of fascism and Stalinism, the "failure" of socialism. The utopias of modern times are at their most portentous as symptoms of these underlying infections of society and intellectual life.

The book disilluminates the relation of science to utopianism and especially anti-utopianism. The "Science - good or evil?" debate both echoes and emerges from the "ancients and moderns" controversy of the Enlightenment. Kumar epitomizes Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) as an early anti-science anti-utopia. The debate continued - humanists versus scientists, Russell versus Haldane, ecologists versus technocrats - and invaded the political sphere: the twentieth-century anti-utopia is an invention to combat socialism viewed as "the fullest and most sophisticated expression of the modern worship of science". Kumar also explores the perpetual urge towards elitism, and its direct connection with the status of science: if knowledge is power, then scientists must rule utopia, whether as the engineers of a Saint-Simonian parliament, the Samurai of Wells's *Modern Utopia* or the behavioural psychologists of Skinner's *Walden Two*. Their humanistic counterparts are the World Controllers of *Brave New World*.

The anti-utopian temperament, Kumar maintains, is not merely conservative, but a

reputation, wealth, sensual pleasure, social convention and popular belief. But in liberating the mind from the illusions of the local community, Bloom observes, "the theoretical life has an almost impossible public relations problem". The community, feeling understandably threatened, may strike out at philosophy, as Athens did at Socrates. But with a little discretion, indeed gentle deception, the philosophical tradition has usually managed to sustain itself, and has never ceased to inquire into the good, the nature of man and other fundamental questions which have in the modern world come to be obscured by a confused relativism.

Bloom's account of the crisis of the West, which is the crisis of modernity itself, consists in a special version of the history of ideas, a compressed account of what Leo Strauss taught his students at Chicago, where Bloom himself now teaches. Any summary of such a summary will teeter on absurdity, but we may briefly say that modernity begins with Machiavelli's rejection of philosophical timidity: the philosophers have only, as it were, built imaginary principalities, whereas the task is to take over the world. But such a world could only be second-rate, not at all like Plato's city laid up in heaven. Bloom's account of Enlightenment (he drops the definite article) is that it popularized philosophy in such doctrines as those of the rights of man. Philosophy spread, inevitably, only in a debased form. It abandoned the quest for the good in favour of taking its bearings from the passions of men - passions intensely studied by Hobbes and Locke, whose work generated the bourgeois societies of the modern world. It is these passions, alias history and culture, whose slipping free from the comprehensive vision of the classical philosophy of human nature has spread into the world and produced the enervating nihilism which Nietzsche exposed.

*The Closing of the American Mind* is in many ways a brilliant book which deserves to be

"perennial philosophy" whose target is hubris. Anti-utopians may applaud reason, science and equality, but deplore their manipulation. A utopia is perfect, its obverse is merely "perfected"; whereas utopia is ideal, anti-utopia is the tyranny of an idea. Furthermore, what is utopia for some is anti-utopia for others; the two modes are incestuously related and mutually permeable - in Wells, Huxley and Orwell, utopian and anti-utopian impulses warred constantly.

Kumar provides both an erudite account of the aetiology and development of modern utopianism, and also five self-sufficient essays on Bellamy, Wells, Huxley, Orwell and Skinner. His association-of-ideas approach reveals how faithfully utopias and anti-utopias mirror contemporary controversies and intellectual fashions. He also unravels the dialogue between utopian authors; Huxley and Orwell criticized each other's anti-utopias but were joined in common cause against the scientific optimism of Wells. One problem for Kumar is that such prolific authors left little unsaid about their own work; indeed, to reassess Huxley's anti-utopia, he need do no more than quote from *Brave New World Revisited*. But as an intellectual biographer, Kumar affords fruitful insights: Huxley believed that democracy was a sham, based on an absurd promise of equality, that Original Sin, qua anti-social urge, is "scientifically" true and that "the ideal state is a material democracy controlled by an aristocracy of intellect".

Most provocative is Kumar's reinstatement of the much-decried *Walden Two*; the behaviourist's paradise. He allows the force of B. F. Skinner's critique of liberalism which, while directing the weapon of freedom against overt oppression, has left us vulnerable to the hidden persuaders. He concludes that Skinner did well to rescue organisms, planning and behavioural conditioning from "their disfigurement within Nazism and Stalinism" and to discover their utopian potential.

Kumar follows Mannheim in asserting that utopias are in decline in our century, although he does this only by discounting a healthy number of recent utopias which are completely utopian. He suggests that utopias were displaced

taken seriously. But it will certainly be found disorientating by some readers. For one thing, it never seems to end up in the direction it points to. Much of its tone of hostility to the modern world might well invoke the call for a religious revival, but Bloom's massive silence on the whole subject of Christianity is a most conspicuous feature of the argument. Instead, philosophy, conceived as the pursuit of the good, is the only source of regeneration. Yet the account of philosophy also has its ambiguities, for Nietzsche, the patron of nihilism, emerges as the hero of the reaction against modernity. Does philosophy, then, lead us out of Plato's cave, or is it merely the case that the nihilistic conclusions to which philosophy leads are not for the uninitiated, who cannot the without myth, religion, ideology? Again, while Bloom repudiates the Marxism which he found so destructive of American universities in the 1960s, his own criticism of the modern world, which is identified as the world of the bourgeois, has a lot in common with what Marx taught. The reason is that Bloom and Marx are both backward-looking critics of modernity who yearn to revive the shattered world of classical Greece. What is wrong with modern Marxism, as Bloom tells it, is that it has been "Nietzscheanized". It has turned into a merely destructive version of the ubiquitous value-relativism. Questions of this sort will tease the mind of any reader of Bloom's book, while the British reader will observe that this is an account of a *misalliance* between German high culture and American low taste, in which the distinctively British element in modern thought hardly appears. Had it done so, a significantly different story could have been told. Above all, perhaps, the reader prepared to overlook the occasional idiosyncrasy and to be stimulated by this *tour de force* will be exhilarated by an evaluation of the modern world through a belief, now almost everywhere discarded, in the perennial character of the questions and answers of classical philosophy.

by social theory in the nineteenth century because utopians expected the imminent realization of their plans: futurology produces no utopias for the same reason. Another explanation suggests itself, however: With the ending of what the Manuels in *Utopian Thought in the Western World* call the "panopticism" of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, the accelerating specialization of the sciences and social sciences and the pervasiveness of professionalism, all social theory, even utopianism, must wear academic dress to gain respectability. Many utopians may be holed up in ivory towers. Kumar notes the "fragmentation" of contemporary utopias, usually addressed to specific audiences such as feminists or ecologists. This too does not signify the end of utopianism. The political pluralism and diversity of high-technology society may have precipitated this diffusion, along with socialism's inability to maintain its standing as the sole opponent of capitalism, but minority utopias are still utopias. Even if utopias were to be seen as wanting, academic commentary is not. Kumar's select bibliography lists some severely Anglo-Saxon post-war works on utopianism; had he looked to France and Germany he could have added a doozy or fifty. Such copious meta-utopianizing must signify that the utopian impulse remains strong.

A possible explanation for the "vanishing utopia" thesis stems from the utopia/religion dialectic. While "there is in principle a fundamental contradiction between religion and utopia", because of religion's horror of burl and its other-worldly aspirations, Kumar finds a path to utopia through the Judaic vision of the New Jerusalem and Christian millenarianism. A climate of religious inspiration and fervour nurtures utopianism and thus Christianity is "the unconscious of utopia". Kumar concludes that without "the structure of sediment and belief" which religion provides, utopia cannot flourish. This recalls Machiavelli's thesis in *After Virtue* that without the "fictive vision of man-as-he-could-be", which was hitherto inspired by religion, post-Enlightenment moral philosophy foundered. Ultimate utopianism may be another victim of the loss of the vision of human potential.

## Learning to be superior

J. B. Trapp

ANTHONY GRAFTON and LISA JARDINE  
From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth and Sixteenth-century Europe  
234pp. Duckworth. £29.95.  
07156-21009

"The study of Greek literature", said the Deao of Christ Church comfortably, "not only elevates above the common herd, but leads not infrequently to positions of considerable emolument." Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine explore the history of the humanistic system of education on which Dean Gaisford's remark rests, with a candour equal to his but from a totally different standpoint. How, they ask, did a system born in the Italian Renaissance and confining itself to the study of Latin and Greek come to enjoy the triumph that made it decisive for the culture and society of Europe and North America from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century? What were its underlying assumptions and - most importantly - by what methods was it inculcated in schools and universities? How did a revelation become an institution, and why?

To the humanists themselves the triumph was a simple matter of the triumph of the better part, and most historians of education, themselves the product of the system they were chronicling, have acquiesced. Humanism, as the humanists never tired of saying, was fresher, more liberal, better intrinsically, qualitatively, ethically, practically than scholasticism. Recent historians of the Renaissance have discounted much in this propagandist picture, and Grafton and Jardine are no exception. Scholasticism, they point out, was infinitely wider and more subtle in its applications and impressive in its achievement than the humanists allowed. Whether, as the authors claim, it was better adapted to the needs of society is arguable. The humanist educational programme, the ancestor of what are now called the humanities, owed its success, they tell us, to its close fit with the requirements of the new Europe, with its closed government élites, its hereditary offices and its respective tendencies. To some, humanism gave "an indelible seal of cultural superiority"; in others it fostered a fluency and a habit of close reading which were valuable in the service of the state. In setting up a cultural norm it encouraged conformity. What had been a passionately pursued ideal to the early humanists divided into a system and a training by which civilized generations learned to recognize and perform their social roles.

To the question whether this is not what happens to most systems, Grafton and Jardine offer only a partial reply. Their provocative and disenchanted assessment of humanism in practice, and its passage from the charismatic to the institutional, is conducted through a series of case-studies and makes no claim to completeness. Taking their cue from the social historians, whose analyses of university archives have told us so much about the composition of the body of educated and educated, and its vast increase between 1450 and 1650, they concentrate on just what was imparted and how. For them, book-lists, manuals, sat texts, lecture scripts and lecture notes are the equivalent of the social historians' matriculation records.

Their first example is Guonno of Verona. Guarino was born in 1374, the death-year of Petrarch; by whose example the humanist movement may be said, if not to have begun, at least to have been put into overdrive. Like his hero Cicero, Guarino had some of his schooling in Greece, even if it had to be Constantinople rather than Athens. Returning with the rich haul of manuscript texts, he began to teach, finally establishing himself for the last thirty years of his long life at Ferrara, where his court school flourished and became the aristocratic faculty of the university. Pupils came to him from all over Europe, England included; for a training that was explicitly claimed to prepare for public life. How did this work? Latin was the staple. The boys were taught to pronounce, read, parse and write it with grammatical correctness and a good imitation of Ciceronian style. They were instructed in ancient history,

geography and mythology. Thus they acquired a knowledge of a limited range of the Latin classics and a training well adapted to make them useful to the state or the prince at home or abroad. Were these elite trainees also made in some way morally good by the programme of study that was rigorously applied by lectures, note-taking, repetition, memorization, exercise? Guarino would have claimed that they were; Grafton and Jardine are sceptical.

From this detailed account of what went on in Guarino's school, they turn by a rather contrived transition to the education of women, which they argue to have been less a Renaissance glory than a shame. Guarino's behaviour to the learned Isotta Nogarola indicates that he could see no role for her and her sisters in society except as subordinate and submissive to men, and the same attitude towards other highly talented women such as Cassandra Fedele and Alessandra Scala can be seen in other humanists, including the great Politian. Even Thomas More, regularly cited as a champion of female education and certainly concerned that his daughters should be educated, tells his favourite Margaret that she should not aspire more than to please him and her husband. Erasmus, though he shows the learned lady or the quick-witted girl running intellectual rings round the slothful abbot or the earnest suitor, allows them no more than their conventional social position. Humanist education stands again indicted as a restrictive rather than a liberating model.

Was the case better as humanism, practised by few, gained a foothold in the Italian universities? This is explored in the first place through the correspondence of two lesser-known practitioners, Lorenzo Gualdetti and Buonaccorso Massari, in 1465. Guidetti concentrates on style: Cicero's letters will teach you to write and you need not bother yourself overmuch with the political and social circumstances of their composition. For Massari, on the other hand, the study of the classics involved a precise knowledge of every detail of ancient civilization, some aspect of which might turn out to be the very thing needed to make sense of a difficult or corrupt passage. Massari carried the day, in Rome at least, with its high general level of intellectual attainment and its outstanding individual scholars. The important, exemplary figure here is Lorenzo Valla, with his insistence that Quintilian's *Education of an Orator*, not long rediscovered, was the true way to an understanding of the necessary interdependence of eloquence and intellectual activity. Detail in itself is useless, but it is only by minute appraisal of the Latin language that one not only can acquire real stylistic range and awareness but is also enabled to expose falsehood - as he himself was able famously to do with the *Donation of Constantine*.

One of Valla's aims was to produce an organic humanist course of instruction in which a reformed dialectic could provide a technique of argument more powerful than any supplied by scholasticism. The scholars of the succeeding generation in Rome, however, did not develop his holistic and difficult approach. Rather, they turned professional, seeing the way to scholarly advancement in a reversion to the more strictly philological, which is not identical with the verbal. Competing with each other in lectures on "difficult" and lesser-known poets such as Statius, Lucan, Martial, Silius, Juvenal and Persius, they matched the learning of their texts with displays of their own considerable erudition; and like Pomponio Lelo and his pupils, for example, they attempted to bring onetime Rome back to life by imitating ancient usages, composing and staging Roman plays in the Roman manner and so on. In Florence, too, Polizian often chose such difficult texts to display his remarkable philological talents.

From this syncretizing account of competing schools and the professionalization of humanism, Grafton and Jardine narrow their focus to the development of a single element, the study of Greek. The revered masters of antiquity had stressed the necessity of Greek: How to learn it, in fifteenth-century Italy? You could go, like Guarino, to Constantinople and even, like Ficino, acquire a Greek wife to help you, but in the East you would be required to master, in a language that you were struggling to learn, no fewer than fifty thousand declensions. Some

accommodation had to be made. The coming of Chrysostom to Italy as teacher of Greek and his reduction of the declensions to ten was a decisive help. So were the printers, with their small-format, bilingual editions of Greek texts, and lexica, all necessary aids.

The second half of *From Humanism to the Humanities* brings us north of the Alps. In their first part the authors were much concerned to discount earlier enthusiastic estimates of numbers directly affected by the ideals of the humanists. They here argue for the widespread influence of two men, Rudolph Agricola and his admirer Desiderius Erasmus. Printing had already made the diffusion of influence more readily possible: the method (*ratio*) of study evolved and recommended by a teacher or pundit could thus become easily available. If one compares Erasmus in how to read a page in the *Method of Study*, which he wrote about 1511 for John Cole's St Paul's School in London, with the surviving records of how Guarino taught the same thing, one finds very close correspondences. One difference is that

Erasmus's educational works went through countless editions and his method became the common basis: to get the benefit of Guarino's you had to go to Ferrara or acquire it second-hand from a pupil of his. This leads easily to greater emphasis on an available structured programme: a curriculum is being institutionalized and the generalized arts course, with its standard books, being established.

The *Exercises* (*Progymnasmatia*) of the later Greek orators, notably Aphthonius in Agricola's translation, which remained in use at St Paul's in Milton's day, were highly popular. The training for which they were used brought with it ready recognition and community of response. Hamlet's "Niobe all tears", for example, would trip the switch in generations trained in Aphthonius, with his imagined first-person speech by Niobe lamenting the murder of her children. The rigour of this method also comes to be held in shape the student morally as well as intellectually, at the same time as it supplies him with a cast-iron technique for ordering his arguments, a way to

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truth, via the ordering of the "commonplaces". So, at least, runs the authors' argument. The chapter is rounded off with some case histories of success and failure on the part of tutors: the exemplary pupils such as the young Scaligers, Henri de Mesmes and Edward VI, against the unruly Julius Schlick.

Finally, we arrive at Peter Ramus, and the apocryphal of the systematist. Ramus's avowed aim was to purge philosophy of its scholastic quibblings and pointless speculations so that it could again, as in antiquity, go hand in hand with eloquence. All very well, but how was the trick to be worked? Grafton and Jardine again take us into the classroom, to show us Ramus himself, the Parisian Ramist teacher of rhetoric at Cambridge, in action. Ten hours of lessons a day was the norm: two hours' lectures on classical literature, four hours' study and memorization and four hours' practice and debate. A student's notes of Ramus's own lectures document him slowly dictating grammatical, rhetorical and dialectical comments which reproduce in substance the commentary he had already published on a series of Ciceronian orations. Mignault, teaching in the 1570s and 1580s a dauntingly larger range of texts, can also be heard in action through a student's notes. On the whole, he followed long-established practice, first paraphrasing his author, then identifying him and defining the genre, before turning to build down for his auditors the fruits of his reading in the commentaries of others and analysing the structure of the argument. Here was a ready and easy single way to orderly thinking

and stylistic excellence.

Grafton and Jardine's treatment of these student notes shows their method at its best and most illuminating: new and detailed information is presented in an exemplary way. They succeed admirably also in giving new life to the marginalia of Harvey, well-known in part since their first publication by G. C. Moore Smith in 1913, but not before treated so knowledgeably. They show Harvey going to Cicero and Quintilian with his Ramus in his hand. Even Quintilian's famous definition of the perfect orator is a Ramist twist. Harvey's perfect orator is the perfect carcerist-pragmatist: "a most excellent pleader, a singular Discourser in my Civil Court, or otherwise; not a bare Professor of any certain faculty or a simple Artist in any one kynde . . ."

In so far as it sets out to demythologize humanistic education by way of an unvarnished account of what it was really like to be subjected to the educational process in the Renaissance, this book will seem luridly redemptive to some and gaff-blowing to others, according to their sympathies. The disinterested reader will raise an eyebrow at some of its generalizations. None of this should obscure the solid merits or the importance of Grafton and Jardine's investigation. Its great value lies in its close scrutiny of the modern historiography of Renaissance education and its insistence that historians should give practice as much attention as theory. Above all, it is welcome for the mass of new information that is revealed by its determined realism. Not the whole story, but a necessary part of it, is here told with great learning and skill.



A maiolica dish painted after Raphael's design for the "Parnassus", c.1530-35; reproduced from Timothy Wilson's exhibition catalogue *Ceramic Art of the Italian Renaissance* (192pp, with 40 colour and 263 black-and-white illustrations. British Museum. £12.50. 07141 0541 4).

## In the medieval mould

Brian Vickers

THOMAS WRIGHT  
The Passions of the Mind in General  
Edited by William Webster Newbold  
518pp. New York: Garland. \$65.  
08240 5458 X

Thomas Wright (1561-1624), born into a prominent Catholic family in York, fled to the Douai Seminary in 1577 in order to prepare for the "English Mission" of returning to minister to the Catholic faithful. A year later he moved to Rome and petitioned to join the Jesuits, who gave him a university education and ordained him in 1586. After holding various teaching posts at Jesuit colleges, Wright wrote a treatise denouncing Spanish motives for warring on England as irreligious, broke with the Jesuits, and returned to England in June 1595 as a secular priest. He surrendered himself to Anthony Bacon, secretary to the Earl of Essex, and for a while enjoyed favour as an informant on Catholic attitudes. But Wright became embroiled in the rivalry between the Essex and Cecil factions, and his recklessness in travelling to York in October 1595 to engage in an open dispute with the Anglican clergy gave Cecil the chance to have him locked up, so cutting him off from Essex. Despite intercessions from Francis Bacon, among others, Wright spent the rest of Elizabeth's reign in custody, in a variety of prisons. At James's accession he was banished, along with forty other priests, but returned to England secretly and established himself as an anti-Jesuit Catholic, loyal to the crown. He was used to cross-examine Guy Fawkes, and later worked to persuade Catholics to adopt at least the show of observing Anglicanism. Exiled again in 1610, he spent the rest of his life abroad, mostly in the Low Countries.

While in prison, probably in 1597-8, he was allowed to write the book for which he is still known to intellectual historians of the period, *The Passions of the Mind in General*. The second edition, in 1604, added a fifth book, which discussed modes of moving the passions (sight, music, rhetorical *actio* or gesture, logical arguments), and a long (and somewhat tenuously related) chapter on "Motives to Love" which lists seventeen motives with various corollaries, in the meditative manner of Augustine's *Confessions*. This 1604 edition also included a frontispiece on "the picture of Chrymoterical yeeres, occasioned by the death of

Queen Elizabeth", which the present editor, William Webster Newbold, excludes, although, it was reprinted by T. O. Sloan in his facsimile reprint of 1971 for the University of Illinois Press.

Wright got his title, and much of the content of his book, from Aquinas's *De passionibus animae in generaliter*. As Newbold notes in his generally helpful commentary, his other sources, notably Aristotle and Cicero, reached him "mediated through Aquinas's text" - that is, as adapted to medieval theology and the role of "emotionality" in "man's journey towards God". Despite living at the turn of the sixteenth century, Wright was almost wholly unaffected by Renaissance humanism, with its recovery of Aristotle's Greek text and Greek commentators. Newbold notes that Wright had his Aristotle through medieval Latin sources, but he should have gone on to note also how out of step he was with many contemporaries writing on moral philosophy and psychology. The key text to the enormous boom of writings on psychology in this period was Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, especially the discussion of the passions in Book Two, which can be traced generating a series of over vast treatises, from Vossius's *Elementa rhetorica* (1606) to the Jesuit Cassinius, whose *De eloquentia sacra et humana* (1619) devotes almost a hundred pages to the topic, and a whole school of German rhetoricians who systematized *pathologia*, the psychology of the passions. Wright, diligently reading Aquinas in the clinic, was far removed from these currents, and might be living in medieval London as he praises English philosophers, such as the Venerable Bede, Dun Scotus, Alexander de Hales, Ockham, glorying that "our Country hath afforded most of the masters . . . which at this time both Scotists, Realists, and Nominalists do follow".

Other pointers to Wright's essentially medieval mind are the fact that when he refers to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* he treats it, as was common in the Middle Ages, as a text in ethics, not rhetoric. The role of *move* in rhetoric, moving the passions, was discussed by Renaissance humanists in terms of *eloquentia*, or the cult of expressivity attained by using the tropes and figures of speech, never mentioned by Wright. He is more interested in such medieval topics as "Problems concerning the Soul", the eleven of which read: "When an Arm or a Leg is cut off by chance from the body, what becometh of the Soul which informed that part?" His editor credits him with a "forward-looking attitude towards science and technology", but his twenty-one questions concerning the emmet or ant ("whether it breatheth or no", whether it have bones, or a heart) are taken from St Basil as an argument for human ignorance, and inability to understand God. Within a half-century they were all answered by Henry Power and Robert Hooke with the help of the newly developed microscope.

Wright's treatise is less concerned with descriptive psychology than with prescriptive moralizing. It tells us how the passions seduce the will, alter the body, disquiet the mind, and how we can "mortify" them. It belongs to a venerable tradition, yet does little to reanimate it. The editor calls it "a landmark work", and claims that few books treat "emotional life" so thoroughly and successfully. Loyalty to one's author can go too far, and praise of its "vigorous and carefully crafted English prose" is qualified in the notes attempting to elucidate garbled syntax, confusion, sentences abandoned half-way through. One immediate stylistic influence the editor has missed is Bacon's *Essays*, published in 1597 and dedicated to his brother Anthony. "In discoursing, to use so gestures argueth slowness; too much gestulation cometh of lightness . . . To enter into company, although of equals, without some civil courtesy or affable speech cometh of rusticity; to depart without taking of leave or salutation argueth indelicacy and contempt." The Baconian observations, symmetrically balanced, are there, if not the famous brevity. Although an anachronism, it is good to have Wright's treatise available again in such a careful and textually thorough edition. But the publishers rather spoil the effect by setting it in a typewriter face, photographically reduced, and printed on a faintly inked, creamy paper, a combination that makes reading painful. Ironically, the older facsimile edition is more legible.

## Antiquarian enterprises

J. P. Kenyon

JOSEPH M. LEVINE  
Humanism and History: Origins of modern English historiography  
297pp. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.  
\$32.95.  
08014 1885 2

It is Joseph M. Levine's contention that up to the end of the eighteenth century the development of English historical scholarship was tied in with the methods and teaching of Renaissance humanism. Here I would have thought he was pushing at an open door. Bacon and Clarendon obviously and avowedly wrote in the classical tradition, and Gibbon, though much more professional and "scientific" in his approach, still owed much to philological and textual scholars working within the humanist tradition.

However, I may well have mistaken Professor Levine's message, for the essays he chooses to republish, written for a specialized purpose and at various times, sit uneasily together in *Humanism and History* and the brief preface which seeks to draw them in its purpose. They are of varying kinds, too. The two long, discursive essays "The Antiquarian Enterprise 1500-1800" and "Aspects

of the last old-style war" are a summation of the latest research findings, including his own, and read like chapters from a larger, wide-ranging book, whereas others are much more technical and sharply focused, avowing their identity as contributions to learned journals or as papers read at professional conferences. Not that they are not interesting in themselves, or in isolation. "The Stonesfield Pavement", for instance, offers a diverting account of the eighteenth-century approach to an archaeological "dig", and the concluding essay, on "The First Gothic Revival", neatly links Gibbon's celebrated *opera* among the ruins of the Capitoline in 1764 with the installation of Sir Joshua Reynolds's stained glass in the apse of the New College, Oxford; but it is not easy to see what the picture is intended to be.

Finally, it is disappointing, though not unexpected in this kind of research, that Gibbon, Levine's attention is never focused on what many of us would regard as the historians at the "sharp end" of the business, selling their work to the public or relating a specific political or cultural message. Gibbon of *Henry VII*, for instance, Clarendon or even Burnet. Yet it is arguable that Clarendon and Burnet, though not scholars in any recognizable sense, were well aware of that "cultural relativism" which Levine says, evaded Gibbon, Vico and Herder.

## Securing the king's ease

Robert Beddard

J. R. JONES  
Charles II: Royal politician  
230pp. Allen and Unwin. £25.  
004942196 4  
JOHN MILLER  
Bourbon and Stuart: Kings and kingship in France and England in the 17th century  
222pp. Philip. £12.95.  
054001117 7

J. R. Jones's *Charles II* is not just another unhelpful biographical sketch of the King, but a thoughtful, stimulating and at times provocative study of his abilities as a "royal politician". It deliberately omits any consideration of his "private life", and, within the long span of his reign, focuses on those periods of episodic activity in which his "personal involvement in policy-making" was most marked, especially the years 1650-1, 1660-2, 1668-73, 1678 and 1679-85. Jones argues that, rather than seeking to understand him as "a post-revolutionary ruler", limited by the changes that had occurred in the 1640s and 50s, "essentially new (post-1660) developments and changes had a far greater impact, creating new situations and new sets of problems for the restored monarch and his ministers", so that Charles and his advisers "found themselves under almost constant pressures - from parliament, the church, foreign states, organized public opinion - which differed essentially from those that previous rulers had encountered".

It was these novel pressures that made Charles pursue "short-term tactics and engage in complex manoeuvring in order to achieve mainly defensive objectives" in the political sphere. These objectives are identified as the preservation of "the rights and powers of the

monarchy" and freedom from "domination by a chief minister", both of which he managed to realize during the last years of the reign. In fine, the author concludes: "Charles achieved complete success as a political tactician". Only in a final summing-up is it suggested, and that in the light of James II's brief and disastrous reign, that this achievement was "both limited and precarious".

Plainly, this is no simple, introductory work, for it assumes a good working knowledge of the reign and of contemporary European history. On the contrary, it is a vigorous and intricate political commentary on Restoration kingship, based on a re-assessment of the published sources, primary and secondary. Its originality lies not in the presentation of new research, but in a fresh and attentive reading of the known evidence - chiefly, *The Calendar of State Papers*, diplomatic dispatches, parliamentary records and ministerial correspondence. Although inevitably there is much in what Dr Jones writes that is already familiar to scholars, he gives a more incisive, positive and favourable account of Charles II's abilities than may be found in any previous biography, save only Sir Arthur Bryant's unwarranted eulogy of 1931.

The King is portrayed as a skilful manipulator of men, with a remarkable sense of timing (shown nowhere to better advantage than in his handling of Parliament in the Exclusion crisis) and a realistic appreciation that *au fond* politics turned on vested interests (seen in his respect for the French ascendancy in Europe). Yet, for all his acclaimed abilities, his political accomplishments were distinctly domestic and unimpressive, as Jones candidly concedes: "the sum total of his achievement was that he could actually rule, at least for the time being, without calling parliament - something that all his predecessors had taken for granted". As for

England's role in Europe, Charles's indifference to foreign policy issues, his need for subsidies and his regard for his Bourbon cousin had reduced the country to the status of a satellite of Louis XIV's France. As Godolphin perspicaciously observed in 1679, the King intended "to keep himself quiet, if he can [and] not to think of the rest of the world".

By "concentrating exclusively on the immediate and the short-term", Charles undeniably outclassed his Whig opponents after 1679. What is less clear from this appraisal is that before 1679 he was noticeably less successful in making the most of his friends. Loyal churchmen, who were the rock on which the restored monarchy rested, had gained in political as well as spiritual stature during the 1650s. They found it hard to trust the King as the God given Defender of their Faith. Repeatedly Archbishop Sheldon took the lead in expressing opposition to his ecclesiastical policies; while a number of discontented Cavaliers gravitated to the ranks of Whiggery. It is impossible to clear Charles of responsibility for much of the uncertainty that came to characterize domestic politics. His waywardness, his duplicity, his mutability and ingratitude bred widespread suspicion of his motives, dispelling the optimism of the Restoration era and fomenting dissatisfaction.

Charles's pursuit of Toleration for Dissenters and Catholics (surely a long-term objective, begun in 1660 and only abandoned in 1673 in the teeth of parliamentary protest) had unfortunate consequences. Besides alienating his natural allies among the Anglican squires, without whose support at Westminster Shaftesbury would have remained powerless, it helped to sustain Protestant Dissent as a permanent force in society; and without the Whig Party could ever have challenged Charles's kingship in the way that it did. Worse still for Stuart fortunes, it encouraged the growth of ultra-Protestant feeling inside the Church of England, which was, in time, to

prove fatal to the survival of the dynasty.

Thus, though the King was clever enough to extricate himself from the mess into which in the first place he had unduly got himself, it is difficult to accept the author's picture of him as "an unfettered sovereign" in the early 1680s. By then, Charles had purchased his "ease" by giving in to the demands of intolerant Tory churchmen. In return for their local co-operation, he authorized a nation-wide persecution of Dissenters and Catholics and sanctioned the wholesale proscription of their enemies from office. It was the triumph of Toryism, not Jones's more fashionable reworking of David Ogg's "Stuart Revenge", which explains the dying down of Tory activity after 1683.

John Miller's *Bourbon and Stuart* is a very different kind of book. Clearly written, well produced and nicely illustrated, it is obviously intended for the popular market. It contains a sequence of deftly turned pen-portraits of the main personalities of the seventeenth century - kings and queens, their ministers and favourites. Through them it seeks to take a closer look at the institution of monarchy and the arts of kingship, in part as a self-proclaimed corrective to the *Annals* school of French historians with its assumption that political life is simply the external expression of more important, underlying, social and economic "realities". In Miller's bid to yoke together the two interrelated dynasties of Bourbon and Stuart there is a tendency to exaggerate superficial similarities, even in political events (such as Charles's sacrifice of Strafford in 1641 and Anne of Austria's letting go of Mazarin in 1651), and to overstate important differences between the countries they ruled. While lauding the author's rejection of social and economic determinism in political history, the fact remains that France's vastly greater size, its natural wealth, superior population and Mediterranean culture made possible very different monarchical responses than those which were open to the Stuarts in England - as the Stuarts knew only too well.

## The last old-style war

Jasper Ridley

ALAN PALMER  
The Bacon of Battle: The story of the Crimean War  
289pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £15.95.  
029779042 0

The Crimean War fascinates modern readers, perhaps because it is so near and yet so remote. Some of those who will read Alan Palmer's book have met meo who fought in it, for the last surviving officer who went to the Crimea did not die until 1940. But it also seems far away in time, with generals leading charges, dressed not in the camouflage of khaki but in resplendent blue and cherry-coloured uniforms with gold trimmings across the chest and on the shoulders, when for the last time the British army went into battle against a Great Power with banners flying and regimental bands playing. The wars of the next decade - the Italian War of 1859 and the American Civil War - seem much more modern.

No one familiar with Alan Palmer's works will be surprised that he has written a book, based on extensive research, which is both erudite and eminently readable, and which combines historical analysis with interesting detail and delightful trivia. The historical analysis is perhaps the weaker part of the book. Mr Palmer is a little too sympathetic to Russia and the Tsar, who was, after all, the aggressor, beginning the war with his invasion of the Danubian provinces of the Turkish Empire. Palmer traces the muddled and half-hearted steps towards war which were taken on both the Russian and the Allied side, which slowly led to the outbreak of the only war which has ever been officially declared between Britain and Russia during two centuries of cold war and hostility. But he underestimates the Radical and democratic hatred of Tsarism as a cause of the war.

British public opinion had been stirred by stories of the Polish mothers who threw themselves on to the railway line at the station in Warsaw in a hopeless attempt to stop the departure of trains carrying their rebellious young children to detention in Siberia. Then in 1849, the year after helping Austria to suppress a nationalist revolution in Hungary, de-

manded that the Turks should extradite the defeated rebels and their Polish revolutionary supporters, who had fled across the Turkish frontier. Palmerston persuaded the Turks to reject this demand, and sent the British navy to the Dardanelles to support them. It is strange that Palmer should dismiss this event in eleven lines as a "much publicized storm in a samovar glass". The British people took a more serious view in 1849, as they would surely do in 1987, of an attempt by a despot to force a neighbouring state, by the threat of war, to surrender political refugees to his tender mercies. It played an important part in arousing the war fever in Britain four years later.

There were other manifestations of the growth of democratic feeling. During the Crimean War, the common soldier was regarded as a hero, not as the scum of the earth, and there was much talk about the incompetence of aristocratic generals and politicians, and a call for their replacement by able men of humbler origins. These sentiments, which became commonplace during the First and Second World Wars, were new ideas in 1855. But if Palmer does not place sufficient emphasis on the Radical influence, he does not completely ignore it; and though there is no reference in his book to Mazzini, Marx, Victor Hugo or Lord Dudley Stuart, he has not overlooked the more important role of Kossuth and Layard.

Perhaps the best feature of this entertaining book is the descriptions of the battles. Palmer gives a vivid account of the well-known cavalry charges at Balaklava, as well as of the more neglected incidents at the Alma and Inkerman.

*The Private Journals of the Long Parliament: 7 March to 1 June 1642*, edited by Vernon F. Snow and Anne Steele Young (519pp. Yale University Press. £65. 0 300 03604 3), like the editors' earlier volume, which covered the period from early January 1642 to March 5, 1642, draws largely on the unpublished sections of Sir Simonds D'Ewes's Journal. This is supplemented with entries from the diaries of three other MPs, Francis Gaudy, Roger Hill and Sir Francis Peyton, all recording their impressions and notes of proceedings in the House of Commons during this period.

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## Against abstraction

Clarence Brown

JOHN BAYLEY  
The Order of Battle of Trafalgar and other essays  
224pp. Collins Harvill. £12.  
000 2728486

Like Marianne Moore, who entitled a book of critical prose *Predilections*, John Bayley seems as a rule to write only about books that he can ungleefully praise. Not that he praises everything in some Phillyanna manner, far from it, but his reviews are models of urbane enthusiasm and fairness, never marred by the petty self-serving triumph, the quotation spiced by the delftly inserted "sic!", or the far from casual aside that Todorov is a Bulgarian, not a Russian, which few of us are able to resist. He has that rarest of qualities in a literary critic nowadays: generosity. It is a measure of our situation that one should feel more than a little defensive about even using the word. He has the capacity for being fond of books, such as Todorov's *Poetics of Prose*, that are fundamentally antipathetic to his temperament.

This is the second of Professor Bayley's collections of periodical pieces. The first, *Selected Essays*, was published in 1984. It contained twenty-two articles, well over half about American writers or scholars, and the bulk of the rest about Russians. This book contains twenty-three, all but three of them book reviews, and the score here is Russia 13, America 0. The rest are mostly about English writers, with one or two about Czechs, Poles and Italians.

But keeping the score by nationalities is actually rather pointless, since everyone of any merit that John Bayley has ever read in any language is constantly present to his mind, and clamouring for a mention. No writer is confined to the essay devoted to him. Forever there to lend scale are Shakespeare, Pushkin and Tolstoy – about whom Bayley has written distinguished monographic studies – and, one step lower, Keats, Wordsworth, Frost,

Flaubert and Hardy. And the modern Russian writers Pasternak, Mandelstam and Akhmatova, in whom Bayley is especially devoted, are seldom absent for long stretches.

What does he dislike? Theory, greyness, meanness, abstraction. "It is not a bit theoretical", he says in fervent praise of Brodsky's discussion of Auden's "September 1, 1939". Of Vasily Grossman's mammoth novel with its suffocatingly ponderous title *Life and Fate* he manages to say: "Structurally, it is dead; spiritually, it could not be more alive." What does he like? Immediacy, personality, the "heaviness of being" as opposed to the "unbearable lightness" of Kundera's title, the absence of humbug; paradox, of which he is so fond that it seems at times not to usurp all other modalities of thought; and in moderation a little sloppiness, the messiness of everyday life and emotion – the *hétéroclite* of clinical theory, with its opothensis of tidiness.

Bayley likes things a little muddled and tenuous, Herick's wild civility, more than an art too precise in every part. Two poems of Zbigniew Herbert are faulted for an excess of "point". Bayley hazards the guess that in the original Polish there must be surface phenomena in the words to make the too vivid point. A line from Herbert, "faithful to heart-tain clarity", might well be taken as a heart-felt device for essay after essay. What Bayley likes can best be conveyed by an example from Wordsworth cited in the title essay. In the original 1797 version of the *Lyrical Ballads* the poet includes a picture of an old man who "does not seem conscious of the impression he most makes on others – that of patience and 'settled quiet'". But this impression is completely dissipated by the passage that follows, in which we learn that the old man is on his way to take leave of his son, a sailor, "Who from a sea-fight has been brought to Fulham, / And there is dying in an hospital". So far from being the picture of tranquillity and unconscious ease, he is driven by an urgent and tragic purpose. Wordsworth removed this ending from the 1800 edition and never restored it. Bayley characteristically laments this impoverishment.

There is no incongruity between the old man's speech and the impression that he made on the poet, but Wordsworth... spoils the wonderful interplay... between character, fact and history, the interplay which was not "subdued" to poetic discourse but left in what can only be described as its natural state, the state where our sense of these things is most receptive.

The natural messiness of things has been removed, Wordsworth has neatened up the scene, the old man has become a character wholly contained in a poem, and our sense of "fond participation" blunted. This is not to Bayley's taste. He is for the natural state.

Journalism is itself a little sloppy, but ideally it is sloppy only in so far as the best conversation is sloppy. A lack of certain kinds of restraint can be heuristic, leading to unanticipated verbal and intellectual inventions. "Twentieth-century myth-making poets, like Yeats and Blok, are direct inheritors of European Romanticism, giving it a personal and individual life." As in the presence of good talk, one does not feel like letting this pass: what life had European Romanticism before, if it was not personal and individual? That is the point, that one feels drawn into the colloquy, and is almost grateful for the absence of the alert editor who might have queried it. Editors spoil good talk. They break in to say that Tsvetayeva was unaware (on page 118) of Rilke's poem terminally ill, but on page 160 she simply ignores it; which? And the whole chain of what was being said gets broken.

Turgenev's once great reputation has been eclipsed principally by his attempt to "please everyone" I doubt that. Could that be more than any other factor to blame? Surely it is the conjunction of our own obsession with the novel and the badly dated nature of all Turgenev's novels except one. The tedium of *On the Eve*, programmatically turning round (and round and round) an issue now of interest only to social or political historians, simply blinds us to his genuine greatness as a master of the shorter form. The impression of being in a good conversation is sustained by the fact that Bayley himself, later in the same essay, seems to admit this objection.

The title essay (not a book review) is intri-

cate and funny in places and filled with a kind of continuous discovery. One begins with the germ text, Trilling's nostalgia for a "quiet place" in which a contemporary intellectual "can be silent, in which he can know something – in what year the Parthenon was begun, the order of battle at Trafalgar, how Linear B was deciphered; almost anything that has nothing to do with the talkative and atitudinising present". One then moves through a muted argument against thinkers identified variously as "today's critics", "structural analysis", and speakers of the "now discourse". Roland Barthes alone is named, but the whole Paris-New Haven axis is clearly intended.

Bayley regards the consolingly knowable past as now even more remote than in Trilling's time, and for two reasons. The Holocaust and the galaxy of horrors clustered round it in the past still adjacent to us are literally impossible to incorporate as knowledge into anything other than spurious poems. And the "new analysts" have no place in their system for the past, which is famously resistant to manipulation. Their traductions and dilapidations are inseparable from the present of their own uniquely overvalued selves. (I am embroidering here a bit, but Bayley's argument lacks only warmth.) The kind of poem that deals after a fashion with the intractable recent past is exemplified by Zbigniew Herbert's poem on the pebble. It deals with the past by conspicuously ignoring it, by snubbing it, as it were, in favour of the mute and immutable mineral.

Books composed of pieces scattered here and there are not usually notable for their form, but there is a shapeliness to this one and it is of a kind that Vladimir Nabokov would approve: the form imparted by images, details, fine touches unobtrusively made. The pebble in the poem by Zbigniew Herbert that we meet near the beginning will return near the end in the role not only of shape-giver but of timeless reminder of a recurrent complex of themes: the paradoxical success of dealing with certain subjects, such as the Holocaust, by pointedly ignoring them, and the solidity and permanence of personal life, in a work of art as opposed to abstraction of every kind.

## Student prints

J. K. L. Walker

JEREMY LEWIS  
Playing for Time  
240pp. Collins. £12.95.  
000 2176300

Just when we thought we'd seen the last of the English comic middle classes, hero they are popping up again in Jeremy Lewis's engaging memoir of his time as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Dublin, in the early 1960s. Here are the mild fatuities, the virginal whimsicalities (Lewis's own phrase), the distrust of pretentiousness, the humane love of impracticality, timidity and sexual incompetence that reassure the reader of Britain's continuing lead in high-tech nincompoopery.

Lewis presents himself as a public-school outsider of a not unfamiliar kind, a genial, sensitive, bookish soul trapped inside a granite-jawed, rugby-player's body, dreamily ill-adapted to the absurdities of institutional life. At school, incapable of assembling a Bren gun, he finds himself being drilled by squeaky-voiced juniors half his height; in broken red on the sports field he, with other amiable shirkers, turns referee with predictably dismal results. Son of a doctor and one-time scholar of Pembroke College, Cambridge (who gravely packs him off to public school with his knitting), Lewis is affronted to be turned down by every college of his father's university. But TCD does not flinch.

At this period, according to Lewis, Trinity was "more reminiscent of eighteenth-century Oxford than contemporary Oxford... tolerant, benign, indolent and indifferent", an atmosphere to which Lewis immediately succumbed, repaying the college's urbanity with the lifelong devotion commonly inspired by ancient unreformed centres of learning, elegantly housed. Trinity's style suited Lewis's temperament: *pas sérieux*, concerned with the surface rather than the substance of things, indecisive – such, at least, is his own version. Released into academic fatalism by Trinity's unpretentious six-week terms, he happily indulged his comic sense, his delight in the eccentric. From the grand walled-off enclave smack in the middle of Dublin, with its bottle-nosed

porters in tail-coats and jockey-caps, he ranges outwards into the decaying Georgian streets and squares of the still sedately elegant city.

Lewis never became part of the "wild" Trinity, the violent, glass-smashing "bloodies" whose antics are observed without rancour from a safe distance; as too, apart from the intimidatingly sophisticated Ifenella, whom Lewis spends two years mooning over (again from a safe distance), are the products of Bedales and Dartington. Rather, his companions in the mild, drunken adventures in suburban Dublin digs, or on trips to the Aran Islands or, in the long vacations, to Istanbul or Central America or the Middle East, are drawn from congenial, frivolous souls who, give or take a rung or two in the social ladder, might have stepped out of the pages of English comic novels of the 1950s; or, given Lewis's passion for Surtees, from *Mr Spange's Sporting Tour*, such as the undergraduate referred to throughout as "Mr Jawleyford" with his "mustard-coloured tweed suit and rusty nail replacing one of his lost false teeth". The reality of life at Trinity, "neither a part of England nor of Ireland", might, one lances, have brought the two modes together: the anti-heroic, anxious, comical self-examination and the mock-herm blow-up of "characters".

Not all of the book is about Lewis's four years at Trinity. The student years are skillfully (and wisely) broken up by long sections filling in the author's childhood in London and Sussex, his family background (there is a notable description of an overgrown Gloucestershire grandfather), and his schooldays. Anecdotal, crammed with eccentric characters and shunt through with a useful common sense, these sections do most to justify Lewis's hope to have produced a memoir that should be entertaining, evocative and symptomatic of middle-class life in England between the late 1940s and mid-1960s.

Jeremy Lewis is funny and good-humoured about it all and one hopes that he is now turning his attention to his early days in publishing, prefigured in the epilogue to the present volume. But he must take his editor's pencil to the adjective triplets and the ever-beckoning subordinate clauses that sometimes leave the reader with no breath, or inclination, to laugh by the time he stubs his toe on the full stop. Then we shall all enjoy the next episode more.

## House-hunting

Christopher Hawtree

SUE LIMB  
Love Forty  
240pp. Hamlyn. £9.95.  
0593 018533

Billed by its publishers as autobiography and by the syntax-defying "British Library Catalogue in Publication Data" as a study of "motherhood", *Love Forty* is in much the same exuberant vein as Sue Limb's first novel, *Up the Garden Path*, which appeared a couple of years ago. While the earlier work chronicled a metropolitan life which left little time for hedonism, *Love Forty* finds her in a battered van, heading through darkest Chiswick, and on to house-hunting in Wales and Gloucestershire, an upheaval duly compounded by her first pregnancy.

Having long exercised a right to choose, and beginning late, she is almost forty before the maternal urge takes a hold of her mind while "by now what the body would like is the life style of an Abba... A little gardening before Complains: a couple of hours' illuminating before Confession."

No such tranquillity is to be found in these pages. With her first novel still fresh in the mind, it would hardly have struck one as credible if Mrs Limb's countess were not soon to be as chaotic as was Stoke Newington, "then a fairly derelict and scrofulous dump, but which has since risen in fashion so fast you can hear the pavement squeak... the cats win pad their way along among the Guinness bottles are now all sleek Burmese called Lao Tzu". She has an anemous eye for those details with which the more capable learn to live but which in her case only serve to fuel a nature that thrives on disorder.

Holed up as temporary custodians of a Welsh cottage which a bachelor friend is trying to sell, Mrs Limb and her Dutchman (Van Dyke, a composer with a large piano to

accommodate) are on the look-out for a place of their own. Whim out by the hills ("you'd need Sherpas, and a grant from the Royal Geographical Society just to get me back to the 'B' road"), the pair decide to look further east. "Let them sneer. I was so relieved at the prospect of giving up all pretensions of Welshness, that I gabbled and capered like a monkey. Going home! I was going home! I didn't know exactly where that was, if course. But you get the general idea."

Duly installed, if none too easily, in a rambling, four-bedroomed semi in Stroud, they find themselves in a curious enclave of artists – "so many of the self-employed gathered together! I bet the Tax Officer for the area is prematurely grey. I hope so anyway." Their home life makes that of Alice Thomas Ellis look a model of austerity and restraint. "In short, the nesting instinct began to pall, thank God." If the following pages, the addition to the nest now on its way, lose some of the verve, the chaos they record is more educative than many of the manuals of childbirth which now flood the market: Mrs Limb never quite loses that sense of humour which more ardent spirits would have us believe should play no part in the business.

All of which leads, unexpectedly, to an appearance on that "chat show without the elint", of which so much is remarked. "I'd rather have an operation than be on *Strip the Week*". As Mrs Limb puts it: "the programme's aim seems to be that they should all be shouting each other down in a scintillating and witty mêlée, until Robert Robinson plummets down from a great height like an osprey seizing a salmon and clinches the whole thing with the decisive snap of an epigram."

Queenie Leavis, one suspects, was being characteristically blinkered when she scrawled "clitric-ridden journalistic rubbish" at the foot of one of Sue Limb's apprentice efforts. Somehow, though, should have given similar treatment to Chris Liddell's illustrations, which appear to have strayed from the Famous Five or Secret Seven.

## Cultivated rows

David Nokes

JOHN CAREY  
Original Copy: Selected reviews and journalism 1969-1986  
278pp. Faber. £9.95.  
0571 148794

"Among the current clichés I especially deplore", writes John Carey in *Original Copy*, "is the one which refers to hospital patients being kept alive by machines as 'cabbages'. This is both inaccurate and insulting to vegetables." This is not, we notice, merely the fastidious distaste for clichés which makes him such a devastating critic of that "knacker's yard of language", the 1983 party election manifestos. It indicates, more ominously, a vegetable-grower's view of the world. "For a cabbage", he goes on, "is a sturdy, self-reliant being, and compared with the average specimen of twentieth century manhood it has, when well grown, a positively athletic air."

For Professor Carey, vegetable gardening is a form of sustained guerrilla warfare whose chief appeal is that it "peeps up the aggressive instincts". It is lyrical on the subject of toxic pesticides. "Unfortunately the strongest and most effective ones keep being withdrawn from the market on the grounds that they have been found to damage the environment. So when you hit an really lethal sort it's a good plan to buy in a large supply." This passion for pesticides carries over into his prose. Of Diana Cooper he observes, "old photos show a blunt, helpless sort of face, rather like a rose just before you drench it with DDT". As an admirer of sturdy cabbages he has no time for the exotic blooms of Modernism who drooped their petals around the figures of Harold Acton, Cyril Connolly and the Sitwells. Not content with drenching these sensitive plants with paraquat, he fumigates their seed-heads in the hot-houses of Eton and Oxford. "Down with Dons", a root-and-branch assault on the

progressivist fantasies of pansy poets and daadys dons, moves from the allotment to the aviary for its companions: "a don is about as well placed to start clamouring for liberty as a budgetary".

Carey is a brilliant polemicist. His reviews induce a furtive thrill at seeing the Titans of the modern Eng Lit syllabus reduced to acned adolescents. Audea's knack for metrical precision is explained by an obsession with lavatory seats. "When invited to Japan, Audea gave as his reason for refusing, his belief that the lavatory seats there would be too small for his bottom. As in matters of metre and form, exact fit was important." He is also a master of metaphor. At prep school, he writes, E. M. Forster found himself "an unskinned prawn among fully armed crustaceans". On the battlefield, William Howard Russell "would emit streams of faultless prose as unerringly as a water-cannon". Yet often invective gets the better of wit. To say of Banrice Webb's *Diary* that "it could just as well have been composed by an intelligent cockroach" is to sacrifice both wit and insight to a passion for phrasemaking.

What emerges from this selection of his reviews and journalism is a delight in rendering people as things, less as an effect of analogy than as a deep-rooted belief that the material and vegetable worlds are less trivial and treacherous than human beings. It is a quality which Carey himself observes in several of the authors he discusses. Agatha Christie, he notes, is more deeply moved by objects, by "the mauve nursery wall-paper, the solid mahogany lavatory seats" than by people. Sachovverell Sitwell's enthusiasms have "an unpeopled feel... when live humans engage his attention they tend to be grotesques". Clive James's grandpa becomes "a snail agglutination of smells and speech-impediments". In Evelyn Waugh's *Diaries* "people disintegrate into strings of incoherent stridulations". He also remarks that Waugh's pages "crawl with squashed personalities".

If a comment which applies equally well to

this volume. Carey invites us to share with him the pleasure of squashing the pampered reputations of Diana Mosley or Maurice Bowra, Stephen Spender or C. S. Lewis. Paralysed by his pesticide they become garish bugs in the entomologist's specimen-case. More difficult to pin down are Carey's critical priorities. Reviewing Martin Green's *Children of the Sun* he writes, "this book is richly stocked with people whom any person of decent instincts will find loathsome". This, though more forcefully expressed, roughly corresponds to Green's own view of the English "Decadents". But Green's critical values, as Carey acknowledges, are clearly presented: "the bores of Mr Green's story are the Leavises and Orwell". Against the background of a "menagerie of limpwristed exquisites" Carey concedes that the tones of *Scrutiny* may seem wholesome. Yet in his article on the Leavises he strikes a more characteristic note, attacking their "superficial bullying rhetoric". And in his review of the Stansky/Abrahams *Unkown Orwell* he presents Orwell as a hypocrite and misfit, constantly swapping between socialist and nihilist.

Carey seeks neither heroes nor allies in his war against the dudes and dunces. Pops, who might provide a model, is dismissed as "dishonest and irresponsible". Larkin, whose cabbage-patch common sense might seem superficially congenial, is described as giving "a convincing impression of having his life-support system inadvertently unplugged". The contradictions of Carey's own position are only too obvious: a don attacking dons, an elitist decrying elites, a stylist disparaging the obsession with style, he seems constantly to be engaged in a form of Swiftian self-satire. At one point he appears, briefly, in a liberal humanist guise mightily castigating Diana Mosley's opinion that Lord Berners's Gothic folly was "more worthwhile than ugly council houses". Then, switching to his vegetable view of the world, he declares "the day I see a row of houses being pulled down to make a vegetable plot, I shall feel that something good

and healthy has happened".

The figures who come out best from this volume are such unfashionable story-tellers as R. L. Stevenson, G. K. Chesterton, Jerome K. Jerome. These are the cabbages among the queens whose sturdy individualism and robust optimism Carey champions against the sneer of the "gontele highbrows". Yet in reality it is less optimism than wit which seduces him. He says of Clive James's *Unreliable Memoirs*, "his exuberance with words seems as natural as sun-tan". The strength of this praise can be indicated by the fact that it recalls Carey's own hedonistic pleasure in storing onions: "now upon row of gleaming amber-bellies – the onion equivalent of a Riviera beach scene". Carey shares this exuberance with words, infuriating and entertaining by turns, his reviews offer a capricious blend of paradoxes – cavalier in their defence of puritan virtues, patrician in their contempt for privilege. They are, above all, compulsive reading. Reviewing *Speak for Yourself*, a selection of Mass Observation surveys, he concludes: "The only defect of this anthology is that it is not twice as long." The same might be said of *Original Copy*.

"The period of the American Civil War was not one in which belles lettres flourished", Edmund Wilson began *Patriotic Gore* (1961), but it did produce a remarkable literature which mostly consists of speedies and pamphlets, private letters and diaries, personal memoirs and journalistic reports. His mammoth study of the literature of the "historical crisis" of 1861-65 has recently been republished (814pp: Hogarth Press, Paperback £8.95, 0 7012 0708 6). Wilson discusses not only the poetry of the Civil War, the novelists of the post-war South and the work of such writers as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Oliver Wendell Holmes, but also the papers of soldiers, "Confederate ladies" and Abraham Lincoln. This edition includes a new introduction by Malcolm Bradbury.

## Punch lines

Philip Oakes

BASIL BOOTHROYD  
A Shoulder to Laugh On: An autobiography  
208pp. Robson. £12.95.  
0860313939

There are certain phrases – "light entertainment" is one, "professional humorist" is another – which strike a chill to the heart. What they suggest, without being censorious, is a menu of trivia, as futile as diet cola, as nourishing as lettuce. Boothroyd has lived with his trade description for nearly fifty years, happily for the most part, but there are moments in this autobiography when his drollery sounds like drudgery and his smile freezes into a rictus. Being pathetically funny is hard work. He drifted into the job as you – or, rather, as he – would expect. After salad days as a chorister in Lincoln he was steered into banking by his father, a rather mysterious person who earned his living at different times as a timber expert, a rent-collector and a hospital secretary. What his true profession was Boothroyd claims to have no idea.

His own progress seems just as arbitrary. For several years he shuffled around provincial branches of Lloyds Bank, living it up at Cambridge, where he played alto sax in a band called the Syncopeppers, and surviving the tedious of Bridge in Lincolnshire, a contender then and now for the title of Most Boring Town in Britain. Landladies mothered him, and at least one landlady, the moustachioed Mr Ashton, who potted rookaby shooting them up the inside of the chimney on which they were perched, instructed him in the finer art of telling half-truths. He claimed, for instance, to have been told by the great balmist W. G. Grace

that he would have got him out had he continued bowling long enough. "At his frank admission that he hadn't", recalls Boothroyd, "one had to doobt one's doubts."

Boothroyd joined the editorial department of the Lloyds house magazine in 1937 and began writing for *Punch* the following year. His first piece was printed above the initials of A. P. Herbert, a composing-room error made worse by the fact that he had bought twelve copies of the magazine to pass proudly among friends. He rallied, however, joined the staff and served under six editors, beginning with E. V. Knox and ending with Alan Coren.

Malcolm Muggeridge, before sainthood descended, was the most iconoclastic of the bunch, and although he upset his proprietor, Alan Agnew, by his gleeful bad taste and rudeness (sending out for sandwiches to deride the inadequacies of a *Punch* lunch), his impact on what was then still a fairly staid publication was profound. Boothroyd's portrait of Mugg on the makos is shrewd, affectionate and slightly awed. What impressed him was not only Muggeridge's style, but his dauntless intimate knowledge of people and affairs.

Boothroyd himself never seems to have made the inside track (his tone is occasionally that of the bemused hick, his nose pressed to the ballroom window), but in 1970 he was chosen by Prince Philip to write his official life and, after taking a year off to do the job, never returned to the *Punch* stable.

*A Shoulder to Laugh On* is designed to entertain and now for the title of Most Boring Town in Britain. Landladies mothered him, and at least one landlady, the moustachioed Mr Ashton, who potted rookaby shooting them up the inside of the chimney on which they were perched, instructed him in the finer art of telling half-truths. He claimed, for instance, to have been told by the great balmist W. G. Grace

TEMENOS has become a focus – one amongst others – of a world-wide network of writers and others who in their various fields are seeking, as we are, to turn the tide of secular reductionism and to reaffirm those spiritual values which have been in the past, and must be in the future, the ground of any true human culture.

Contents: Editorial Note Kathleen Raine, Audre Tarkowsky Peter Pelz. The Apocalypse Andrei Tarkowsky. Peter Brook and Traditional Thought Basarab Nicolescu. A Story about Humanity Jean Mambino. Poems: Sabbath 1983 and Sabbath 1984 Woodell Berry. Chapters from a Novel, Flagman, what of the Road? V S Yanovsky. Poems Oaten Sjöstrand. Vernon Watkins Roberto Sanesi. Unpublished Poems Vernon Watkins. Letters to Michael Hamburger Vernon Watkins. Selections from Letters to Francis Dafao-Labeyle Vernon Watkins. Aphorisms Jan Le Witt. Winifred Nicholson's Flowers Kathleen Raine. Greening Refreshment John Lane. Writings on her Painting Winifred Nicholson. Poems by Tom Scott, George Mackay Brown, Ryno MacKinnon. Medusa and the Arts John Carey. Poems by John Allison. Some Concepts of the Secular E W F Tomlin. Poems by Nellie Curry, Andrew Staniland. The Theory of Visionary Knowledge Henry Corbin.

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## In and out of character

### Victoria Glendinning

JAMES SPADA  
Grace: The secret lives of a princess  
346pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £12.95.  
0283995351  
ALEXANDER WALKER  
Vivien: The life of Vivien Leigh  
342pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.95.  
0297791184

The great scriptwriter in the sky gave Vivien Leigh and Grace Kelly star parts, some lousy lines, and wrote each of them out of the script before the end of the last reel. They hated died, unexpectedly, in fifty-three. Famous, beautiful, and sufficiently talented, both led troubled lives. One of the more dubious pleasures of reading about the private unhappiness of screen goddesses is *Schadenfreude*. Every notion dear to the hearts of the cautious, the dim and the unsuccessful seems borne out. This is not the intention of their biographers. In exposing for the first time Grace Kelly's promiscuity, James Spada claims justifiably to be revealing a more interesting person than the

legend allows.

The purpose of biography, writes Alexander Walker in his introduction, is to "assign a meaning to a life". He does not actually say what he feels the meaning of Vivien Leigh's life was. But his book, which covers over-familiar ground with the selectivity of a metal-detector, suggests how role-playing on stage or screen affected her off-stage, generally with unhappy results.

Vivien Leigh and Grace Kelly were accomplished role-players from childhood. Both had Roman Catholic mothers who believed above all in keeping up appearances, and both had unsupportive fathers. The pressure to behave pleasingly and present a demure, genteel façade seems to have barked up their fires. Grace Kelly, it appears, screwed her way to the top doggedly and, once there, had affairs with most of her leading men while preserving—with the help of the studio's publicity machine—her ladylike image. Her combination of "refinement and sexual charisma", as Spada puts it, was the secret of her screen success; it was exactly right for the mood of the 1950s, and "for many men, Grace solved the whore/undonna dilemma".

The photographs show that she was, ironically, at her most beautiful in her early forties. Then, playing the long, dull part of Princess Grace of Monaco, she was no longer making films. Prince Rainier refused to allow her to pursue her career. It was largely on this account that "no pretence of great togetherness was made by Grace or Rainier after the mid-70s". But he was desolated when she died after a car-crash.

The most interesting part of Spada's book is about the mechanics of Grace Kelly's marriage. The Prince's courtship was facilitated by an unlikely go-between—his spiritual adviser, a Father Tucker. Grace had to undergo a fertility test, and provide a dowry of \$2 million—an old European custom. Father Tucker explained to the incredulous Kellys. (Monaco was having a cash-flow problem.)

As one insider said, "they bought each other out of a catalogue". One doesn't order from a catalogue something one does not fancy. Both parties were keen on this mutually advantageous match, and on one another. But the new Princess, whose French was and remained poor, felt lonely and homesick in the 220-room palace until the birth and upbringing of her

children gave her a worthwhile role. Her last years were less fulfilling. The children were growing up and proving problematic. She longed to be acting again. She filled her time with charity-work, poetry readings, and dried-flower collages. She drank too much.

So did Vivien Leigh, who was less stable a character from the beginning, and probably cleverer—she was a famously quick solver of the *Times* crossword. Walker believes her emotional troubles had their beginnings in childhood, when her mother, living in India, sent her away to board at a particularly grim English convent. Her natural vivaciousness too easily became "a high-strung restlessness".

She really was the parts she played, in that the characterization of Scarlett O'Hara in the book *Gone With the Wind* could be applied, without changing a word, to Vivien Leigh. She also saw things with "the clarity of Lady Macbeth", and could be as ruthless; playing Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, she said, "tipped me into madness". The roles she played "accumulated like different identities", writes Walker, and her primal legend, that of Scarlett, "reached out and enfolded her".

If Grace Kelly married into royalty, Vivien Leigh achieved quasi-royal status in her marriage and stage partnership with Laurence Olivier. She said herself they were "too greedy" for success and the world's adulation. She was the more demanding, sexually and socially; towards the end of their twenty-year alliance Olivier was using work as a refuge from home-life. Vivien had the temper and temperament of a McEnroe; but Olivier's career blossomed as hers did not, and like Grace Kelly she ended up as a consort. The loving care of her last husband Jack Merivale could not repair her damaged psyche or curb her excesses.

Walker's accounts of weekends at Nolley Abbey, the country house which the Oliviers made the setting for their marriage, convey something more superlatively stagey than anything framed by a proscenium arch. The host, exhausted, longs for bedtime. The hostess, ecstatically animated in the small hours, whips up the guests to play games, sometimes of an obscene or macabre kind ("Ways to Kill Babies"). It was country-house living as depicted in the smart, suggestive West End plays of the period. "Many of the Oliviers' guests had appeared in such plays; some had even written them." The play within the play is a familiar cotion. Alexander Walker's production of the play outside the play gives his book a quality unusual in theatrical biographies.

usual generalities are unacknowledged: that stars have replaced our lost ancestors, that they are the icons and saints of our amorphous religiosity or the equivalent of Greek heroes who go forth to battle for us, sacrificial victims of our devouring inadequacies. Instead, Dyer analyses three starbursts as exemplary phenomena. Marilyn Monroe's dumb-blonde naturalness makes her a clear victim of sexual politics. Paul Robeson, in order to function "within white discourses", had his blackness, sexuality and socialism domesticated for mass consumption. Then, rounding off the gallery of modern hermeneutics, Dyer examines why Judy Garland—resilient victim, bruised survivor and hurt misfit—appeals so strongly to the contemporary gay audience. It is by far the most absorbing chapter because it fulfils the author's promise not only to take images apart but also to convey something of how audiences have felt. His Judy is complex folk-heroine of our times, while Monroe and Robeson are observed through the optic of contemporary intellectualism. Stars do not shine on everyone with equal brightness but, absent, dead, victimized or cults, look down they do. *Heavenly Bodies* catches just some of their light.

### David Coward

DAVID THOMSON  
Warren Beatty: A life and a story  
469pp. Secker and Warburg. £14.95.  
043653015X  
RICHAUD DYER  
Heavenly Bodies: Film stars and society  
208pp. Macmillan. £25 (paperback, £6.96).  
0333295404

Warren Beatty is a star who bares selected regions of his soul in the public intimacy of cinemas but gives neither copy to the paparazzi nor an inch to the money-men. Both by accident and design, most of his eighteen roles have projected a persona which is an appealing mix of cagey hustler and wide-eyed innocent. But is he the sum of his parts? "Nobody knows much about Warren Beatty, including Warren himself," said *Esquire* magazine in 1967, and David Thomson, jovial and miffed by turns, keeps it that way. Facts, fights and credits are reeled off genially enough and they are fleshed out with gossip, bits of cinema history, airy generalities and standard bitchiness—Robert Wagner never managed "to get character into his acting or the little boy out of his face". The miffed surfaces with each mention of Beatty's refusal to participate in the venture: he appreciated the thought but wasn't talking to anybody. Period.

Perhaps it's in the blood. His sister, Shirley MacLaine, turned down a biography last year but at least let it be known that she was not prepared to give away moments she could use herself to write her own words at \$900,000 a tome. Undeterred, Thomson has produced an "imaginative" biography which is "admittedly discursive, playful and speculative". Warren is observed from the outside and there is not much to see. Famous for packing a "plutocratic feathery with notches", he is taut, cool, tense, poised, still, intelligent and shy, "a Prospero who has kept the look of an Anou". Beatty, cinema, biography and Hollywood have words poured all over them. This is author-in-a-jam play number one. Number two is an interview story, released in goblets of three or four pages making up a third of the book, which follows a hopeful movie writer D in his quest for the ineluctable star, Eyes, who does not talk to anybody either.

This desultory fiction is, of course, a fable designed to illuminate the world stars inhabit, though it is also coyly offered as "the suggestion of an unmade movie that might be fit for Warren". Not that Thomson expects Beatty to read either the life or the story and even challenges him to think that they concern him unduly. For this heavily playful and relentlessly discursive book makes shameless love to stardom and openly massages its erogenous zones: power, glamour and excitement. Along the way, we learn that Beatty is less effective in physical and comic roles than as a mean char-

acter. There is also some incisive film criticism—of *McCabe and Mrs Miller* and *Reds* in particular—and an acute suggestion that fewer hesitations and less caution would have released more of Beatty's considerable talents. Even so, "the great, shy indy killer" remains shrouded in a mystery which also envelops what this book sets out to reveal: "the idea of American beauty for men at this time". It is a pity that Thomson seems to have surrendered to the perverse unreality of the world of movies which he himself analysed very sharply in *America in the Dark* (1977). It is also regrettable that he should not have made a better fist of nailing elusive, enigmatic Warren Beatty when he made such a good job of pinning down fey, tricky Laurence Sterne in *Wild Excursions* (1972).

If David Thomson is "drawn to stardom", Richard Dyer holds it up gingerly and shakes it. What falls out is a heap of modish theorizing. His argument is that stars validate the aspirations both of social groups and of individuals and that these aspirations are determined by historical and cultural forces. But his attempt to tease out general ideas about stars is rooted in an over-narrow theoretical base. The

## Making do with the pretty good

### Michael Wood

PAULINE KAEI  
State of the Art: Film writings 1983-1985  
404pp. Marion Boyars. £18.95.  
0714528692

Placed side by side, Pauline Kael's books collect more than twenty years of continuous, thoughtful and sprightly film reviewing, the best there is in that genre. Her longer pieces—on Cary Grant and Orson Welles—tend to gush and come apart at the arguments, but her reviews are lethal and exciting. She won't take trash, especially earnest, well-intentioned trash, and she finds virtues in scorned and unlikely places. Her titles deal in giddy language (*Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, *I Lost It at the Movies*) and artless jokes (*Reeling*, *Deeper into Movies*), and her prose is relentlessly bouncy, full of zapping and bopping and digging. *Flashdance*, for example, "is like a sleazo putting the make on you". These not entirely fortunate titles are meant to indicate that the movies and the critic are in a condition of vulgar good health, and far from cultural perfection. "Going to the movies", Kael wrote in 1967, "was more satisfying than what the schools had taught us was art. We responded totally—which often meant contemptuously, wanting more, wanting movies to be better..." It is easy to see how important these signals could be, and also how time has faded them, so they look like kitten pithes a little too young for the wear. Still, there are

worse faults than not wanting to be a *grande dame*.

Kael's new collection contains reviews from June 1983 to July 1985, from *Octopussy* to *Prizzi's Honor*, first published at roughly fortnightly intervals. Her prose is unrepentant, and a bit wearing, as collected journalism often is—a reflection of the need to keep the readers of the *New Yorker* alert even after their second Martini. But the large dose is unfair to the small dose; the parts are discreeter than the whole. Kael can be funny without being cute, and often writes with a grace and an elegance which easily get lost in the breathless. Hugh Hudson brings to *Greystoke* "his unique mixture of pomp and ineptitude"; Robert Redford, in *The Natural*, "mimes innocence and hurt like a dreary master". *Trading Places* "looks like a Christmas classic on a TV set (that needs adjusting)", and *The Draughtsman's Contract* "sits on the screen like an implacable palsy". Woody Allen's *Zelig* is "like an example of a nonexistent genre, or a genre from another country... like a teeny carnival that you may have missed".

"Kael has an aversion, she says, 'to movies in which people pay grace at the dinner table (not to the practice but to how movies use it to establish the moral strength of a household)'. This is a comment on *Places in the Heart* ("God knows it's got heart") but it doesn't need that title? A triumph?"), and to the same line she dedicates the "reiterated humanity" of *Terms of Endearment*. She is good on *Talky and Funny*—she was probably the first to see clearly

that in goody-goody movies the man up for lynching always turns out to be innocent, as if it might be too radical to suggest that even gully characters should not be lynched.

She watches actors, listens to the music, praises cameramen, and (usually) blames the director. A good measure of her taste is her great enthusiasm for Michael Caine—"He lets nothing get between you and the character he plays... He may be in acting (arms something like what Jean Renoir was in directing terms)" (like clumsiness of the phrasing suggests the dodginess of the idea)—as against her admiration for Meryl Streep: "we just observe how accomplished she is".

So what is the state of the art? Dire: lots of gloss and nostalgia and amirking piety. People used to tell Pauline Kael she was lucky to get to go to the flicks all the time, now they just commiserate: "Do you have to sit through that stuff?" She doesn't; there is a witty account here of how she couldn't endure *Barry Lyndon*. The characters are hateful and full of despair, and start hitting each other. "I was already overdoosed on Finster, and the dialogue hadn't even started." And she won't accept the implied verdict on the cinema anyway. "Whenever people have asked me what they should go to see, there has always been something to recommend." The recommendations which follow are this stuff, though—some twenty-three movies, including *Splash* and *Passage to India* and *Rosie's Caravan*—and really just point to the problem. This energetic and demanding critic is reduced to shilling out films she can only call "pretty good".

## Paradoxes of a puritan

Paul Griffiths on the writings of a conservative musician who welcomed the electronic age, and whose "quest for the anonymity of the recording studio helped keep him one of the foremost stars of his time".

TIM PAGE (Editor)  
The Glenn Gould Reader  
476pp. Faber. Paperback, £12.50.  
057148522

Of the musicians who ever took Marshall McLuhan seriously, Glenn Gould is considerably the most interesting (the interesting thing about John Cage, of course, is that he has never accepted the virtue of providing interest). In 1966, when Gould published an elaborate defence of his decision two years earlier to abandon playing the piano in public and devote himself only to recording, it was to McLuhan's concept of "electronic culture" that he appealed; in 1964 he had already begun an essay with a reference to "the electronic age". But he was certainly no wide-eyed child in the streets of the global village. That 1966 apologia quickly offered the view that computers could "file away the memories of mankind and leave us free to be inventive in spite of them", but just as quickly moved on to insist that recordings were now the chief means of musical communication. And although he justified this as a temporary condition on the way to a world in which "art would be unnecessary", in which the "audience would be the artist and their life would be art", it is hard to think of a less likely proponent of cultural amnesia. Cage could decide that Beethoven was in error; Gould—though he also had reservations about Beethoven, if on quite a different level of sophistication—spent his life making careful recordings of music from the past.

Among works by living composers, he recorded only a sonata by Křenek and three pieces by fellow Canadians: not much to set beside the volumes of Beethoven, Mozart, Sibelius, Schoenberg and, most particularly, Bach that were his main contributions to the electronic era.

If this suggests a man determined to take plenty of reading matter with him on the post-Gutenberg express, then there are close parallels with the wide-awake reactionaries who were his favourite composers: Orlando Gibbons, making Tudor polyphony in what we glibly label the age of Monteverdi; or Richard Strauss, keeping the key to gardens of harmony that Schoenberg had forsown a generation before; or Schoenberg himself, finding that twelve-note technique invited him to a contrapuntal liveliness unknown for a century and a half; or, of course, Bach, continuing to figure while the rest of the world had learned to tap its feet to the *style galant*. These are, to say the least, strange enthusiasms in a pianist; though no more strange than the same pianist's antipathies, to Chopin, to Schumann, to Debussy, to Mozart's concertos. But surely this was not mere perversity. Gould wrote eloquently of the "tactile" qualities of music he admired; however, there were musical criteria that came a long way before gratefulness to the keyboard, and they are not hard to find in the pages of this bulky, often quirky (a very Gouldian word), constantly fascinating anthology. Even at his most ironic, Gould writes always from passion and close scrutiny, but his prose reaches its highest elevation only when he contemplates the wonders of diatonic counterpoint, as when he describes fugue structure as "the perfect vehicle for the adventurous and subjective harmonic traffic of baroque art", or when, considering Minkovsky, he alludes to "the mystery of the single voice being joined in some professional harmony through the imitation of its fellows".

Gould's recordings are justly celebrated for their contrapuntal clarity; but again, this was more than a performer's predilection, as the essays help to make clear. Gould's most ambitious composition, his String Quartet, was a massive tonal movement in sustained counterpoint, to judge from the description and quotations included here: one might think of a geologically becalmed Schoenberg Op 4 or Zemlin's No 2. The only other work of which we learn in this volume was a fugue for quartets of voices and strings, swallowing its own tail under the title "So you want to write a fugue?" But there is evidence that the art of fugue

never anonymous.

It is impossible to avoid the suspicion that recording suited Gould for more personal reasons, that this was an art of figure in another sense, an art of flight. After all, a man who preferred to speak with his friends by telephone—who even had friends he never met in any other way—is obviously going to be a natural candidate for a way of communicating musically without personal contact. And yet the arguments he brings against conventional concert-giving rest on more than his own psychology or his reading of McLuhan. What he repeatedly criticizes is the valuing of personality before music, the incursion into his art of marketing and promotion, which demanded something instantly recognizable to sell, and which also encourage a view of musicians as competitors in the marketplace. Again, this criticism may have been fuelled by his own press treatment as a freak in the days of his international tours (his low position at the keyboard, his overcoats and his hypochondria all made good copy; much easier to cope with than his extreme temper, his refusal of any onward urge not contrapuntally justified or his quizzical estimation of Hindemith). Nevertheless, no browser in a record shop could avoid the realization that we live in an age of "stars"; and another paradox of Gould's emulmion, related to the first, is that his quest for the anonymity of the recording studio helped keep him one of the foremost stars of his time.

Perhaps he would have seen that paradox as



Enrico Prampolini's curtain design for Gian Francesco Malipiero's *I capricci di Callio*, Rome 1942; is taken from *Opera: A concise history* by Leslie Orrey, revised and updated by Rodney Milnes (252pp. Thames and Hudson. Paperback £4.95. 0300202176).

## Eclipse or oblivion?

### Michael Kennedy

BRIAN REES  
A Musical Peacemaker: The life and work of Sir Edward German  
328pp. Bournemouth: Kensal. £14.95.  
0946041490

After Edward German's death in November 1936, a note dated 1934 was found among his papers: "I die a disappointed man because my operatic works have not been recognized." He had reason to feel bitter that year, because the Royal Philharmonic Society, having awarded him its Gold Medal, insensitively and inexplicably failed to include any of his music in the concert at which it was presented to him by Beecham. Today the situation has not changed. Most of us could count on a very not confirmed buchefer, success as the composer of incidental music for Richard Mansfield (*Richard III*), Irving (Henry VIII) and Anthony Hope (*English Nelf*), for which the "Nell Gwyn Dances" were written) and the accolade of completing Sullivan's *The Emerald Isle*—this took him to 1901 and acclamation as a "leading figure among English musicians". Then came Elgar. Perhaps German's "serious orchestral works" were further casualties of Elgar's dominance from 1900 to 1914, though he never blamed his friend and backed his public preference for his operas over his "serious" works like *The Golden Legend* and

*Ivanhoe*. Ironically, German suffered from being regarded as Sullivan's successor, to the extent that his originality has been partially obscured. Mr Rees makes out a good case for thoroughly prepared and well-cast revivals of both *Merrill England* and *Tom Jones*. German, the mildest of men (hence the title of this book), bestirred himself once to protest about the way the scores of these works were "bungled through" by inadequate and incompetent orchestras. In this respect they have probably fared better in the concert versions than in the theatre.

Rees tells the story of German's relatively uneventful life with a light and sympathetic touch. Brian German Edward Jones (German had a hard "g") in Whitcombe, Shropshire, he was known to his family as "Jim". A happy childhood, student days at the Royal Academy of Music, a blighted love affair which left him a confirmed buchefer, success as the composer of incidental music for Richard Mansfield (*Richard III*), Irving (Henry VIII) and Anthony Hope (*English Nelf*), for which the "Nell Gwyn Dances" were written) and the accolade of completing Sullivan's *The Emerald Isle*—this took him to 1901 and acclamation as a "leading figure among English musicians". Then came Elgar. Perhaps German's "serious orchestral works" were further casualties of Elgar's dominance from 1900 to 1914, though he never blamed his friend and backed his public preference for his operas over his "serious" works like *The Golden Legend* and

inevitable at a period of transition, a way station towards the utopia where, by electronic means, all may participate as composers, performers and listeners. Quite how this was to happen is never clear; it seems unlikely Gould would have welcomed a world of players on Yamaha synthesizers, and no doubt there was yet another tension in him, between the egalitarian and the supreme specialist, the prophet of universal musical communication and the pianist who could play like no one else. He speaks most plausibly of technology's advantages where he remarks on "its capacity for dissection, for analysis—above all, perhaps, for the idealization of an impression". His view of man's evolution enabling "him to operate at increasing distances from, to be increasingly out of touch with, his animal response to confrontation" seems on the other hand a terribly mistaken reason for optimism.

Rather in the same way, the most closely focused essays in *The Glenn Gould Reader* are those which concern specifics: roughly half the volume is occupied by sleeve notes, many of them for records no longer available, and all of them eminently readable (if tantalizing) without the aural evidence; there is also a fascinating memoir of Stokowski, a eulogy of Barbara Streisand, and a deconstruction of Petula Clark cheerfully for its sideswipe finding that in the Beatles' recordings "the indulgent amateurishness of the musical material, though closely rivalled by the indifference of the performing style, is actually surpassed only by the ineptitude of the studio production method". When he tackles broader themes, such as music in the Soviet Union or "The Prospects of Recording", he is not always so convincing; though, as I have tried to suggest, his ideas are provocative even when most eccentric. And in that respect his writings are of a piece with his musical readings. Nobody could fail to be stimulated, irritated and charmed by the cleverness and candour of a man who was, in his own estimation, "the last of the puritans", pursuing his dedicated, isolated task of representing music as fully as possible, for listeners whose own isolation made it possible for them to respond as fully as possible. But perhaps the chief value of this volume will be to encourage us back there, to the magical fingers and appalling grunts of Gould's recorded presence.

In the second edition of his *The New Music: The avant-garde since 1945* (222pp. Oxford University Press. £22.50. Paperback, £8.95. 0193154714) Reginald Smith Brindle has added a chapter in which he expresses the belief that the future of music will be associated with technological change.

Yet he lacked the fibre—or perhaps he just lacked a Lady Elgar to drive him on—that enabled Elgar, for all his depressions, to ignore criticism and write what he wanted. Bernard Shaw's savaging of German's "Norwich" Symphony ensured that he never attempted another; his miserable experience in a collaboration with W. S. Gilbert in 1909 put paid to his operatic career. He refused a commission for a work for the Royal Philharmonic Society's centenary in 1913, and the *Theme and Six Diversions* (1919) is his only subsequent work of any consequence. Like Elgar, he became virtually impenetrable creatively in the post-war world that seemed so alien to the time of his triumphs. Thereafter he went to Lord's, Café Royal dinners, played billiards and devoted himself to the work of the Performing Right Society. For the last years of his life he was blind.

A *Musical Peacemaker* is spattered with misprints and it is surprising to find a former headmaster perpetrating the solecism of "the Rev. Vincent". There is also a most curious reference on p228 to a letter to German from Elgar dated June 6, 1932, when Mr Rees erroneously states, "the latter's elevation as Companion of Honour released correspondence from using his title". Elgar's letter is quoted thus: "My envelope should simply bear my name and the letters C. H. afterwards". But Elgar, an OM since 1911, was never appointed CH. What can this mean?



## American notes

### Christopher Hitchens

For the past four decades, cultural life in the Soviet Union has been monochromatic. And for the same period, the American image of Russian arts and letters has been fairly uniform. Not the least of the side-effects of the *ghennast* or *perestroika* movements has been a corresponding revision of prevailing impressions in the United States. The only major medium that has so far out reflected this process is Hollywood, which continues to show Russia in bleak, black and white scapes, peopled by resentful cronies, ubiquitous cops and sullen, undernourished people. This lug will no doubt be made up for. At most other popular levels, there has been an astonishing willingness to compensate – some would say to overcompensate – for a generation or two of heavy stereotyping. ABC News *Nightline*, one of the most successful mass-market current affairs programmes in the country, has devoted a two-hour special to the output of Soviet television – showing it to be as riddled with game-shows, patriotic soap-operas, frustrated consumer demand and sporting murmurings as the American networks. *People* magazine has put "The Russians" on its cover, filling an entire number with "gnsh, just like us" picture spreads. And there is an increasing vogue for "space bridges" whereby American studio audiences are hooked up by satellite with gatherings in

Sverdlovsk or Leningrad. Most of the major television celebrities, such as Phil Donshue, have done this at least once. The most common demotic reaction is pleasant surprise at seeing Russians in colour.

Somewhat more complication is involved in the milieu of painting and literature. An organization called Sovart (which admittedly sounds like an echo of the Zhdanov era) is bringing contemporary Russian pictures into America for exhibition and for sale. The work is the product of Artists' Union members, but it is not union-sponsored painting. At the Chicago Art Fair last May, Professor Leszek Kolkowski confessed himself astounded at the work of a Soviet photorealist painter named Fribi Sovich. One of Sovich's paintings showed the interior of a Russian railway carriage, as viewed through the window from outside. On the exterior of the carriage was the embossed symbol of the Soviet Union, which was shown as tarnished and peeling. Even such an unillusioned person as Kolkowski evinced surprise that the painting had been allowed, let alone passed for export. Another painter, happily named Brislakin, has Chingal-like, included Hebrew script and symbol in his pictures. Knowledgeable critics detect ideological and even Catholicist messages in the text.

As Yevushenko pointed out in a poem many years ago, painters have often played jokes on their undiscerning rulers and patrons. But this seems to have gone beyond satire and

subterfuge into expression itself. As before, Yevushenko has become important in the argument as to whether this latest "liberalization" is authentic or phoney. And in the field of writing, both fictional and non-fictional, American opinion is considerably influenced by the number of hardened Soviet exiles now settled in this country. Many of these belong to the "fried snowballs" school, if I may borrow from their metaphor of the feasibility of Soviet reformism.

On May 21, Joseph Brodsky resigned from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in protest over the award of an honorary membership to Yevushenko. "I cannot in good conscience sustain membership in an organisation which has thus so fully compromised its integrity," wrote Mr Brodsky, who has served hard time in the Soviet prison system. He added in a subsequent interview the opinion that Yevushenko was "a weather vane. He throws stones only in directions that are officially sanctioned and approved. To have him as an honorary member of the American Academy, as though he represents all Russian poets, seems to me unseemly and scandalous."

Hortense Callisher, president of the Academy, says mildly that it "doesn't have a monolithic position and our members don't sign an oath to agree with one another when they join. So if you resign, you resign." I have seen Ms Callisher's name most often in the *New Criterion*, which takes an ultra-conservative position on matters cultural and political. Mr Brodsky obviously thinks he has administered a strict lesson in gullibility, while the Callisher line is a modest defence of pluralism. There will be more clashes (and perhaps some coincidences) between these points of view as the American view of the Soviets continues to thaw. The view ought not to soften any faster, or any slower, than the reality.

think and whether you want it enforced or not. I am sworn to uphold the law and enforce it and yes I say yes I will yes.

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The most costly and imposing new structure on Capitol Hill is the Hart Senate Office Building (named for the late Philip and not the extant Gary). Visitors who meander into its white marble and glass interior are now arrested by the mass and scale of Alexander Calder's last work, "Mountains and Clouds", which reaches to the ninth storey of the building's twelve-floor atrium, was finalized in design on the night that Calder died. It has taken this long to complete because of budgetary difficulties only alleviated by those great names of art patronage, Dillon and Mellon. The total cost of completion and installation was \$650,000. A black sheet-metal stable weighing thirty-nine tons has been surmounted by a 4,300 pound aluminium airborne mobile. The mobile, which is computer-directed, gives a decidedly cetaceous impression when viewed from the ground level. But then, as Calder must have known, clouds can be very like that.

Since the dedication a few weeks ago, the atrium has been free of the paper darts and frisbees which graver Senators always feared would be the result of such a tempting indoor space. Alas, if you ascend to the top floor and look down on the slowly circulating whale-clouds, you see that their surface is the constant target of rubber bands, paper balls and perhaps unwanted petitions. Congress is low on ceremonial offices, but a keeper of the people's mobile ought to be appointed.

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The American newspaper map has been changed forever by the arrival of *USA Today*, the fast-news, two-colour coast-to-coast product once derided by its critics as the journalistic equivalent of McDonalds. The paper is now in profit, and a fixture. Allen H. Neuhauf, owner and originator of *USA Today*, now feels confident enough to have an "authorized" book about the newspaper brought out under the self-congratulatory and self-mocking title of *The Making of McPaper*. In this authorized book by Taylor Buckley appears the following story.

In 1984, when the paper was still struggling to establish itself in the market, Mr Neuhauf called a meeting of executives at Pumpkin Center, his home in Cocoa Beach, Florida. After the meeting was a dinner. The executives found the table furnished with unseasoned bread and Israeli wine. Mr Neuhauf then stepped from behind a curtain wearing a crown of thorns and took position in front of a wooden cross. "I am the crucified one," he told the company, warning them that this was the "Last Supper" and that they would be "the passed over" if *USA Today* did not soon turn a profit. *USA Today* is devoid of campaigning, sensational or any other kind of red-meat journalism. But the proprietor still seems just as likely to wind up building an opera house for his girlfriend as any magnate past.

### INFORMATION, PLEASE

**Max Beerbolm** (1872-1956): any unusual material in public or private hands; for a new descriptive bibliography to be published by the Oxford University Press.

**Mark Samuels Lerner**, Department 101, 1870 Wyoming Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009, USA.

**John Talmon** (1677-1726): Manuscripts, particularly letters, in connection with the publication of his Letter-book (Bodleian).

**Hugh Macdonald**, National Library of Scotland, The Mound, Edinburgh EH2 2EL.

**Captain R. Lankford** (or variant spellings, eg Langford) son of his pamphlet *Dialling* (London, 1632), referred to in an eighteenth-century manuscript; any reference verifying the existence of such a person or publication, and ideally whereabouts of the pamphlet itself.

**A. V. Simcock**, Museum of the History of Science, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3AZ.

**Herbert Reed**: any reminiscences and/or letters: for a biography to be published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

**James King**, Department of English, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8S 4L9.

**George Henry Lewis** (1817-78): letters by or to him or his family; for an authorized edition of the letters to be published by Obol State University Press.

**William Baker**, Polack's House, Clifton College, 1 Percival Road, Bristol BS8 3LF.

**Dylan Thomas**: any manuscripts of poems, or corrected proof sheets, still in private hands; also proof copy of *Twenty-three Poems* (1936), sold by Charles Rare Books; for a new edition of Dylan Thomas's *Collected Poems* to be published by J. M. Dent.

**Walford Davies**, Ralph Maud, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University College of Wales, 9 Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth SY23 2AZ.

## Letters

### Change in the Soviet Union

Sir, - Françoise Thom's letter (July 17) made depressing reading. Her simplistic approach to Soviet history was more reminiscent of propaganda than social science. And her claim that those who study France and Britain enjoy open access to official information is naive. The so-called explanation advanced in Mme Thom's letter trivializes processes which it is important to understand. Societies, even socialist ones, are complex, and monocausal theories like hers are unlikely to cast much light on their dynamics.

Second, it is not only the Soviet Union that attempts to restrict what information is available. This is a problem faced by scholars who study all governments; differences between us are a matter of degree. For instance, all governments enjoy a monopoly over official statistics, and most use it to present themselves and their policies in a good light. (In Britain there have been nineteen changes of definition of unemployment in the past seven years as the Government has sought to minimize the political costs of the phenomenon.) But this does not mean that scholars should ignore what governments have to say. Very often, one can learn a great deal from the half-truths of official propaganda.

Third, while I am not opposed to using material provided by dissidents, it should be recognized that it has its limitations; dissidents have their own axes to grind (as do academics, of course). More important, they often have not had access to the requisite information. Economists have learned more about resource allocation from a single issue of the official statistical handbook than from all the writings of Solzhenitsyn, Zinoviev et al.

Surely we can all agree: material from both official and unofficial sources should be considered; but it must be treated critically. It may help us to construct a clearer picture of the social processes that are at work in the Soviet Union. Understanding may then begin to replace dogmatism.

**ALASTAIR MAULEY**, Department of Economics, University of Essex, Colchester, Essex.

### Austria and the Arts

Sir, - As a long-time observer of the Austrian scene, I cannot allow Norman Lebrecht's letter (July 3) concerning Gustav Mahler to go unanswered. Mr Lebrecht seems to suggest that Austria's past, "so apparent in its political present", ie, its antisemitism, is ultimately responsible for the cut by the Austrian Ministry of Education in the subvention for the Gustav Mahler Society in Vienna.

Otto Biba, of the Society of Friends of Music in Vienna, and I are responsible for an annual week of Haydn's music in Vienna, the Haydn-Tag. Until this year, the city of Vienna and the Ministry of Education supported our modest mini-Haydn festival. Now, all our monies have been withdrawn, but antisemitism can hardly be the motivation behind that withdrawal. The simple fact is that the Austrian State, responsible for magnificent and hugely expensive programmes for pensioners, the sick and the unemployed, is nearly bankrupt. If it is a question of keeping someone like my eighty-eight-year-old mother-in-law in a comfortable and totally state-supported old people's home rather than paying money for Haydn festivals or an edition of Mahler's letters, I agree that the Austrian Government's priority – for people – is the right one.

**H. C. ROBBINS LONDON**, Pouchouettes, 81800 Robastens (Tarn), France.

### Illustrated Literature

Sir, - In his ungenerous review of *The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature* (July 17), Tony Tanner finds it "hard to imagine for what kind of audience it was written". I can tell him. It was written for an audience composed of people, like me, of reasonable education, with a general interest in English literature but whose speciality lies elsewhere. (Before my retirement, I taught theology.) People of this sort will find the book admirable.

As for Tony Tanner's diatribe against illus-

trations, it is silly and verbose. (Do you really pay your reviewers by the line?) He needs to be reminded of that child who speaks for the child in all of us: "what is the use of a book", thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"

**O. T. GWEN**, 1 Oakwood Road, Liverpool.

### Local Verses

Sir, - Discussing the *Oxford Book of Local Verses* (July 17) your reviewer comments that it contains some "sorry stuff", citing as an example the collapsing rhymed verse on a war-memorial fountain in Yorkshire:

If you want to be healthy, wealthy and stout,  
Use plenty of water inside and out.  
Let animal and man drink freely.  
A pint of cold water three times a day  
Is the surest way to keep the doctor away.  
Whoso thirsteth let him come hither and drink.

It occurs to me that this may not be continuous verse at all, however, but four separate inscriptions consisting of two rhyming couplets and two separate lines. If in addition they were ranged alternately round the fountain itself they would provide a good example of the "intimate connection between object and word" that the review dwells on elsewhere.

Perhaps someone who knows Lofthouse in Nidderdale, where I believe the fountain stands, could enlighten us further.

**JOHN BEER**, Peterhouse, Cambridge.

Sir, - I think Patricia Beer has missed the royal joke.

Far from composing those nonsense-verses herself, the Duchess of Windsor borrowed them from Eleanor Farjeon's rather jolly book of topographical children's songs, *Nursery Rhymes of London Town* (1916). "King's Cross! What shall we do? / His purple robe is rent in two! . . ."

**JAMES FERGUSSON**, *The Independent*, 40 City Road, London EC1.

### AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Anthony Barnett's *Iron Britannia* was published in 1983.

Robert Beddard's forthcoming book includes the two volumes of *Restoration Oxford, 1660-1667*, and *A Kingdom Without a King*, a study of the Interregnum in the Revolution of 1688-9.

Clarence Brown is Professor of Comparative Literature at Princeton University. His most recent book is an edition of Mandelstam's *The Noise of Time*, 1986.

William Weaver was cited as Critic of the Year in this year's Press Awards. He is the Art Critic for the *Observer*.

Barbara Goodwin is the co-author (with Keith Taylor) of *The Politics of Utopia: A study in theory and practice*, 1982.

Christopher Green is lecturer in the History of Art at the Courtauld Institute. Paul Griffiths is the editor of *The Times and Hudson Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Music*, published last year, and author of *New Sounds, New Personalities*, 1985.

D. W. Hartnett's collection of poems, *A Signalled Love*, was published in 1985.

Christopher Hitchens's *The Elgin Marbles* is published this week.

Arthur Jacobs is the editor of the fifth edition of the *New Penguin Dictionary of Music*, 1978, which first appeared under his editorialship in 1958.

Jonathan Keates's novel, *The Stranger's Gallery*, will be published next month. Michael Kennedy's *Adrian Boulton* was published last month. Among his other books is *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 1985.

John Lloyd is the Editor of the *New Statesman*.

Peter Lomas's *The Limits of Interpretation* will be published this autumn; his *The Case for a Personal Psychohistory* appeared in 1981.

Kenneth Minogue is Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics. He is the co-author (with Michael Blakes) of *Thatcherism: Personality and politics*, which was reviewed in the TLS 20 June 5.

John Madigan is a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. His *Sentiment and Sociability* will be published shortly.

John Madigan is a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. His *Sentiment and Sociability* will be published shortly.

Nicholas Murray's poems have appeared in Gavin Ewart's anthology *Other People's Clerihews*, 1983.

David Nokes's *Jonathan Swift: A hypocrisis reversed* was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for the best biographical work published in 1985.

P. K. O'Brien is Reader in Economic History and a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. He edited *Railways and the Economic Development of Western Europe 1830-1914*, published in 1983.

Michael O'Neill is Co-Editor of *Poetry Durham*.

Philip Oakes's most recent book is *At the Foot of Band Hall*, 1983, the final volume in an autobiographical trilogy.

Miles Peake's *National Management of the International Economy* will be published later this year. From 1977 to 1982 he was an adviser to the Bank of England.

J. V. Pickton is Director of the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, Manchester University.

Claude Rayson's books include *Order from Confusion Sprung: Studies in eighteenth-century literature from Swift to Coleridge*, 1985, and *English Satire and the Satiric Tradition*, 1984.

Jasper Ridley's *Henry VIII*, 1984, was reissued in paperback last month.

Miranda Seymour's most recent book for children is *Casper and the Secret Kingdom*, 1986.

Larry Shaffer is Professor of Psychology at the State University of New York.

Anthony Storr's most recent book is *Jung*, 1986, published in the Modern Masters series.

Matthew Sweeney's most recent collection of poems is *The Lame Walker*, 1985.

Jöhan Symond's books include *Charles Dickens*, 1951, and *Critical Observations*, 1981.

A. P. Thirlwall is Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Kent, and editor of the seventh Keynes Supplement volume, *Keynes and Economic Development*, which was published in March.

J. B. Trapp is the Director of the Warburg Institute. He edited *The Apology of Sir Thomas More*, 1979, and the catalogue of the More exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in 1977-8.

Nicholas Tucker is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Sussex.

Brian Vickars is the editor of *English Literature: A new history*, published in May, and the author of *In Defence of Rhetoric*, which will be published in January 1988.

Michael Wood is Professor of English at Exeter University, and editor of *America in the Middle Ages*, or "Sancti Maria, it Had Slipped My Mind".

### The Formation of Christendom

### The Formation of Christendom

**JUDITH HERRIN**  
This is a book written with great verve, freshness of approach and originality of view. It shows a vivid appreciation of the immensa variety of local conditions, opinions and customs in both the eastern and the western halves of the Roman Empire in the early Middle Ages: an important contribution to a huge subject which is just beginning to be studied as a whole.  
Sir Richard Southam  
466 pages, £29.50 (0 831 151 86 9)

### The Athenian Assembly

**MOGENS HERMAN HANSEN**  
A revised and enlarged translation of the original German edition, this is the first book this century on the people's assembly of classical Athens, the best attested example of a direct democracy. Hansen interprets the assembly in the light of the most significant modern parallel: the political mass meeting in the smaller Swiss cantons.  
280 pages, £28.00 (0 831 15485 X)

### The Medieval Market Economy

**JOHN DAY**  
This book brings together ten essays on market mechanisms and economic movements in the Middle Ages. It emphasizes the active and often destabilizing role of money in the economy at a time when the money supply consisted overwhelmingly of metallic currency.  
240 pages, £27.50 (0 831 15479 5)

### The Formation of a Persecuting Society

**Power and Deviance in Western Europe 905-1250**  
**R. I. MOORE**  
The developments of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which saw the appearance of popular heresy in Europe, the establishment of the Inquisition and the persecution of Jews, lepers, prostitutes and other minority groups, are here examined by R. I. Moore, who argues that the true origins of persecution lay in fundamental changes in social and economic organization, religion and government then taking place in Europe.  
178 pages, £19.50 (0 831 13746 7)

## Basil Blackwell

108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF  
Suite 1503, 452 Park Avenue South,  
New York NY 10018







## Arrogant insights

Peter Lomas

F. ROBERT RODMAN (Editor)  
The Spontaneous Gesture: Selected letters of  
D. W. Winnicott  
211 pp. Harvard University Press. £15.95.  
0674833368

D. W. Winnicott's formidable charm and his ability to put others at ease goes some way to account for his unique capacity, as a paediatrician and psychiatrist, to communicate with children. This gift, combined with prodigious energy and creativity, has made him arguably the most influential psychoanalyst since the days of Freud and Jung. *The Spontaneous Gesture* consists of a number of his letters selected and given an excellent introduction by the American psychoanalyst Robert Rodman. Some reveal his concern for issues in the wider world related to his own work; others are written to immediate colleagues about matters directly connected with psychoanalysis.

Winnicott gave his passionate support to the emotionally deprived, and many of these letters were an attempt to influence those in the psychiatric and social services towards a more humane understanding of mothers and children. Their style is striking. They are written with the attractive clarity that one would expect from a man renowned for his ability to convey the intricacies of psychoanalytic thought to a lay audience. Although usually tactful he is forthright and courageous. Now and again the personal element intrudes in a bizarre way. What, for instance, must Lavinia Beveridge have thought, on receiving a letter criticizing his plan for a Health Service, to be informed, three times in the space of a page, of Winnicott's hate. "I must at any rate be honest with myself and express to you yourself the hate that rises naturally in me..." Surely the point at issue is the Health Service, not Winnicott's psyche?

Of greater moment – and, I imagine, the chief *raison d'être* of this book – are letters written to psychoanalysis, in which Winnicott forcefully and lucidly argues points of view about theory, practice, and the politics of the British Psychoanalytic Society. Although there are no significant additions to his published work, ideas often appear in a new phrasology. Writing about the fate of the "true self" in very disturbed people, he says:

In effect the true self is hidden right away and only emerges under very special conditions if at all. In this defense the patient turns himself into a mental hospital and the true self is a patient hidden away in the back somewhere in a padded cell.

He appears to have little doubt about his own views and few inhibitions in criticizing those of others. He habitually, after attending the fortnightly psychoanalytic meeting at the Institute of Psychoanalysis, wrote a letter in the speaker. These letters can seldom have brought comfort to their recipients. There must be many an analyst who, after breakfasting with one of Winnicott's letters, felt more inclined to go back to bed rather than to face his or her patients. Occasionally he is aware of this, as when, in a letter accusing Hannah Segal of arrogance, he writes: "I find I want to say something to you as a result of last night's meeting and I hope you are feeling strong enough..."

One is left with curiously mixed feelings about these letters: admiration for the integrity, passion, intelligence and common sense which go into them (exemplified by a masterly, albeit unrewarded, plea to Anna Freud and Melanie Klein in which he asks them to abandon the divisions in psychoanalytic training), yet disquiet at their narcissism. Win-

nicott does not usually write as to an equal; he instructs rather than seeks insight. He emphasizes his own importance: "The main thing is that what you are working at here is something that I find myself deeply in sympathy with." Furthermore, he often insists on the priority of his own ideas and becomes enraged if, in his view, they are not sufficiently recognized.

It is probably unhelpful when assessing a scientific theory to give any weight to the personality of its author. But psychoanalysis is not a science, and anything that can help us to understand why its practitioners hold certain beliefs is worth considering. Winnicott stressed the extreme dependence of the child on the mother and the disastrous consequences of a failure to protect him from trauma. Similarly, he laid great emphasis on the therapeutic value of "holding" the disturbed patient in a manner which mirrors the way in which a mother holds her baby. His everyday behaviour, as revealed by these letters, shows an unusually maternal, caring attitude to those around him but he appears to lack sufficient respect for their autonomy. It may be that his insistence on the analyst's, rather than the patient's, impact on the personal dialogue derives from his sense of his own importance and flaws his very impressive contribution to healing.



A detail from Joseph McKenzie's "Doll's Hospital", Tayport 1969, taken from *Pages of Experience: Photography 1947–1987* by Joseph McKenzie (89 black-and-white plates, Edinburgh: Polygon, £19.95, Paperback, £12.95, 0948275421).

## Sorting out the psyche

Lary Shaffer

L. S. HEARNshaw  
The Shaping of Modern Psychology: An  
historical introduction  
423 pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £19.95.  
0710205767

In *The Shaping of Modern Psychology* L. S. Hearnshaw has presented a densely packed summary of the history of psychology from the ancient Greeks to the present. Because of its great diversity, psychology resists being summarized, yet Professor Hearnshaw has made a concerted effort to bring order to the account of the origins and development of the field. The proper scope of a history of psychology must be the result of a decision about the boundaries of the modern subject, but there is considerable disagreement among contemporary psychologists concerning the borders between psychology and disciplines as diverse as zoology, philosophy and counselling. Hearnshaw chooses the broadest criteria and treats psychology as the sum of all ideas and all research about the behaviour, mind and soul of man and the other animals. The penalty for being brief as well as comprehensive is that the chapters often seem to consist of one-sentence summaries of individuals' accomplishments. Much of the coverage of pre-nineteenth-century psychology, for example, reads like a telegram about the history of philosophy. Although the ideas of each thinker are clearly summarized, there is not enough discussion of the evolution of ideas as they have passed from thinker to thinker. The book is an excellent source for quick reference, but it does not

readily engage the reader with a flow of narrative.

Some specialists will be upset by Hearnshaw's panoramic depiction. He has not sharply differentiated scientific from clinical psychology or the philosophy of mind. In consequence, the reader can get the mistaken impression that psychologists from each of these domains have an understanding for and appreciation of each other's contributions. Further, many contemporary philosophers of science will disagree with Hearnshaw's affirmation that science rests on its methodology. Many of them now believe that the scientist's framework of scientific and unscientific presuppositions about the nature of the world as well as the interpretation of the results. These presuppositions exist prior to undertaking scientific work and they have made scientific philosophers wonder if it is possible, as Hearnshaw asserts, for science continually to approach truth through successive experiments. Hearnshaw has an enormous respect for the Baconian theme that science is a universal set of operations which can be applied to virtually any idea about man. When applied, these procedures are supposed to result in an improved understanding of reality. But in parts of the book Hearnshaw is suspicious of the value of a scientific psychology focused on observables, and praises an approach to psychology that has as its rightful subject matter the traditional properties of mind: the processing of information, decision-making and control.

It is unfortunate that Hearnshaw so rarely turns from the descriptive to the prescriptive. As a well-respected senior psychologist he is

just the sort of person who should be voicing opinions about the validity of modern branches that have sprouted from ancient roots. But he refreshes his readers with only a few evaluative outbursts, such as that which he levels at the behaviourist psychology of B. F. Skinner. He is willing to allow that Skinner's cardinal notion that behaviour is determined by consequences has been "powerful within the strict limits of its validity". This grudging praise notwithstanding, he attacks behaviourism in most of its individual tenets. Because some behaviour can be shaped by rewards does not mean that all behaviour can be so manipulated. Skinner's extrapolations to the development of verbal behaviour are largely speculative and have been rejected by most linguists. Extensions of Skinner's thinking to include human social behaviour, culture, morals, law and religion are reported to be utopian and naïve, and "his rejection of physiological explanations for behavioural phenomena can only be regarded as bizarre". Hearnshaw isolates as the major Skinnerian flaw the fact that the organism must first perform the behaviour, or, in Skinnerian terms, "emit" the response; the psychologist can increase or decrease its frequency with reward or punishment only after this has happened. But Skinner has never given an adequate explanation of where the behaviour comes from in the first place. Taking account of these problems, Hearnshaw labels the Skinnerian position "untenable and absurd".

While he should be praised for putting on the gloves in Skinner's case, readers of works about the shaping of modern psychology have a right to expect that the study of its history will result in vigorous evaluation of the spectrum of contemporary ideas and practices.

## Changing practice

J. V. Pickstone

IRVINE LOUDON  
Medical Care and the General Practitioner  
1750–1850  
354 pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £30.  
019 8227930

Irvine Loudon is a general practitioner turned medical historian. As a doctor he assisted in the revitalization of general practice which produced for GPs their own Royal College; he has brought the same skill, seriousness and affection to his historical investigations of "ordinary" doctors from 1750 to 1850.

His major achievement is the systematic portrayal of rank-and-file practitioners in late eighteenth-century England, concentrating, mainly, on the apothecaries and surgeons-apothecaries of the market towns. They were not called "general practitioners", but they agnosed ills, sold drugs, and mended bones. Increasingly, they also attended to normal childbirth.

They were solid citizens, typically with a grammar-school education. Before mid-century their training was largely by apprenticeship; thereafter, Loudon claims, hospital experience became its dominant feature. These newer forms of medical education were attractive (and expensive) in part because the teachers could boast new knowledge of anatomy, surgery and midwifery. But the commercial success of the common practitioners depended pre-eminently on their ability to "persuade their patients to pay high charges for an astonishing quantity of medicine".

But around 1800 the scene, and the book, change. Where the first half depicts the practitioner and his work, the second is largely concerned with the organized politics of newly self-conscious general practitioners. Where the first half relies on diaries and records of individual practice, the second draws chiefly on pamphlets, committee proceedings and the (often newly established) medical periodicals.

Here Loudon makes his second major contribution. Building on the work of S.W.R. Holloway, he substantiates the argument that the self-recognition of general practitioners was primarily due to the rise of competition for their chief source of livelihood. Chemists and druggists claimed no medical training, nor did they ride about to visit patients; they stood brazenly behind their counters and sold drugs much more cheaply than did the (surgeon) apothecaries. To these latter they were "quacks", far more dangerous than the itinerant, because far more numerous and permanent. This new form of retailing spread rapidly; surgeons/apothecaries/man-midwives sought protection by classing themselves as general practitioners of medicine, so distancing themselves from pharmacy. Their best hope was for a Royal College of General Practice, to recognize the essential unity of family doctoring; but they lost out. Their interests remained subordinate to the London corporations, which represented the traditional "estate" – of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries.

Loudon's is now the most thorough account we have of this loose and extended medical polikiekiog. In addition he provides very useful data on Poor Law practice, "overcrowding" and medical incomes which were probably lower in real terms after 1800 than during the late eighteenth century.

It is extremely salutary to find such a detailed being given to economics in a study of a profession, but Loudon's chronology and his parlour of explanation raise problems. It may well be the case that English medicine in the 1830s was closer to an undifferentiated, free market than either before or since. But that medicine then seemed a "mere trade" may require explanations that go beyond the internal dynamics of the medical market. Income and status came from patients and potential patients, and between 1750 and 1850 their economic, social and ideological situation also changed considerably. Surgeons who served cottagers might be succeeded by doctors serving mill-boys. That too is part of the story.

## Did the Empire pay?

P. K. O'Brien

L. DAVIS and R. HUTTENBACK  
Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The  
political economy of British Imperialism,  
1860–1912  
0521 236118

Erected by two citizens of a Great Republic (devoted since 1763 to the dismemberment of the British Empire), funded by undisclosed sums of Foundation dollars and laid brick by brick by a workforce referred to in the preface as a "great corps of research assistants, secretaries and word-processors", *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire* is a skyscraper which now dominates the landscape of imperial history and will invite laudatory and denigratory responses for years to come.

The book cannot be ignored, for one thing because it deals with a theme of contemporary relevance, namely the long-term costs and benefits of retaining and extending the British Empire for the half-century or so down to the First World War. By 1914 the Government of a small kingdom (sustaining forty-five million people on fifty-six million acres) exercised sovereignty over British India (a territory of nearly 2 million square miles and a population of 322 million); it ruled directly over sixty dependent colonies extending over 3.2 million square miles and populated by 5.2 million "natives". In addition British jurisdiction and political influence intruded into the affairs of five self-governing Dominions, containing 24 million (mainly white) citizens who occupied an area of 7.6 million square miles.

Although psychic returns accrued to almost all Englishmen from the contemplation of such large and visible manifestations of "their" superiority and a majority probably experienced that moral glow from assuming the white man's burden, *Mammon* (as its title proclaims) is concerned with the tangible and measurable pecuniary rewards from this enormous supra-national enterprise. Who benefited from the largest occidental empire since Rome? How far the political decisions taken from 1860 to 1914 to extend its boundaries can be justified *post hoc* on grounds of private and/or social profit is the big question raised by the book.

Economic explanations of British imperialism of a more or less deterministic kind had been debated long before Lenin's famous pamphlet was published in Switzerland in 1916. But the specifically economic impulses behind the annexation and retention of alien territory, resources and populations by the United Kingdom cannot, as L. Davis and R. Huttenback demonstrate, be validated or invalidated by reference to the ex-ante profitability of investing in the Empire. Thus when they analyse the interest groups, members of Parliament, parties and ministers involved in the process of decision-making affecting the Empire, economic explanations for the actions of these groups evaporate into mere rhetoric. Amusingly they reveal that the territory of the Empire expanded at an annual rate of 5,300 square miles when Conservatives exercised power, compared with 87,000 square miles under Liberal administrations. But under neither party did organized lobbies enjoy conspicuous success in their efforts to bias imperial policy in favour of British business. Furthermore, Davis and Huttenback do not find any statistically significant correlations between the voting behaviour of MPs and their financial interests in the Empire. Innovative forays into the quantification of political behaviour lead the authors to conclude "that the Empire's development was largely unrelated, at least in the political sphere, to the search for profit".

Ironically, in this paradigm of a "diometric", quantitative-historical study, a systematic economic testing deals powerful body-blows to the economic interpretations of nineteenth-century imperialism. Nor does the ex-post evidence, so cogently marshalled, provide much support for *Marxist* theories of imperialism, however sophisticated and qualified. For example, the tabulations of finance raised on the London capital market from the sale of equities, bonds and debentures for transfer outside the United Kingdom reveal that from 1865 to 1914 only 39 per cent of that total was destined for the Empire. And a mere third of this imperial component found its way to India or to dependent

colonies where the political authority of the London Government might, in theory, have been used to ensure high rates of return for domestic investors. Before 1914 the "potentially exploitable" resources and populations of the colonies did not attract British capitalists, who preferred to place their money in foreign countries (61 per cent of all issues) or the Dominions (28 per cent of issues).

The realized rates of return obtained by Englishmen who opted to entrust their savings to imperial enterprises (whatever they expected at the time) turned out on average to be anything but extraordinary. On this complex issue of profitability Davis and Huttenback must be highly commended for assembling and analysing the records of 482 British firms operating in three locations: the United Kingdom, the Empire and elsewhere in the world. These painfully mined statistics will now be widely used and subjected to rigorous scrutiny from historians as well as cliometricians, who will observe that the data seem to be dominated by incorporated firms and for that reason may well be unrepresentative of proprietorships, partnerships and mercantile enterprise involved with the Empire. Business historians will remark on the daunting complexities of transcribing the accounts of n bygone age into acceptable measures of "profitability" – a difficult enough matter to handle even with modern concepts and records. Sample size by industry and by location is not exposed but the absolute number of firms behind the reported average quinquennial rates of return tabulated for imperial firms active from 1860 to 1890 must have been tiny and possibly representative of nothing more than the accidental survival of their records. All these averages are, moreover, unweighted, and the authors admit that "the firms included in the sample vary greatly in size – there are companies with total assets of less than £100 and others with assets in millions". Finally, there are some inexplicable year-by-year fluctuations (even after "smoothing"), which the authors will surely have found as puzzling as their readers'.

Cliometricians are by discipline "lumpers" and historians congenial "splitters" (to borrow J. H. Hexter's formulation). Thus the authors do not shrink from aggregating their data on particular firms into "general measures of profitability" (in the form of five-year averages) which purport to show that from 1860 to 84 the rates of return on funds placed in the Empire were appreciably higher than on investments located either in the United Kingdom or in foreign countries. Thereafter imperial returns were distinctly lower than those realized either at home or elsewhere in the world.

Unless (as neo-Leninists might continue to suggest) the outflow of funds to the Empire operated to stave off diminishing returns on net investment within the United Kingdom, this impressive exercise in quantification provides no comfort for historians who assert that supernational profits lay at the back of the scramble for Empire from 1880 to 1900. However, these new numbers might be used equally to support the argument that exceptional (and perhaps well-publicized) rates of return earned by a small sample of imperial enterprises may have lingered in the collective memory and established "irrational expectations" that the Empire would turn out in the end to be highly profitable. That was after all the view propagated by politicians like Randolph Churchill and Joseph Chamberlain as well as by several famous economists and economic historians of the day (Ashley, Cunningham, Hewins and Nicholson).

But despite the authors' rather cursory acknowledgement of their progenitors (Mill, Cairnes, Goldwin-Smith, Thorold Rogers), and despite their cavalier treatment of Hubson, it is the nineteenth-century radical case, against Empire (as being a gigantic waste of time and resources) that now stands the best chance of being vindicated in the cold light of cliometric history. For example, unless modern-day sympathizers with late nineteenth-century imperialism are prepared to join Lenin and assert that the British economy was incapable of absorbing higher rates of domestic capital formation from 1885 onwards, than the rates of return earned on the outflows of investible funds to the Empire turn out to be lower than alternative opportunities actually

and potentially available within the kingdom. And as the occupational analysis of 801,000 shareholders undertaken by Davis and Huttenback reveals, that particular foresight seems to have been granted to Britain's manufacturers and even to its merchants – particularly if they resided outside the metropolitan area. The share portfolios of these business men contained rather low proportions of imperial securities compared with the paper assets held by peers, gentry, financiers and other "rentier" groups in British society.

Historians recall that from 1843 to 1910 two-thirds of UK emigrants travelled to destinations outside the Empire and the vast majority went to the United States. Not until just before the First World War did the Empire absorb more than half of all emigrants leaving the British Isles. Nor (as Michael Edelstein's carefully quantified assessment of the probabilities demonstrates) can it be argued that imperial markets were necessary for the long-term development of the British economy. Before 1914 they absorbed around a third of total exports. Even if the dependent colonies and India had been politically in a position to impose tariffs on British goods (at say, the high levels favoured by the United States) the loss of national income would have been well under 3 per cent. Britain obtained her food and raw materials from all over the world and paid competitive prices for imports. As early as 1864, Cairnes remarked "we certainly do not receive from our colonies any commercial advantages which are not equally open to the whole world which we should not equitably command though the political connection were severed tomorrow".

Why then gained economically from sustaining and extending the imperial connection? Not British taxpayers at large, whose annual payments for central government rose from under £2 per head in the 1860s to around £3.50 after the turn of the twentieth century. Throughout this period their taxes amounted

to something like two and a half times the comparable "burden" carried by the citizens of other developed societies in Western Europe and North America. Furthermore, that burden was inequitably distributed across the class structure. As late as 1903, nearly two decades after the tax system had begun moving in a less "regressive" direction, the average rate of tax (direct and indirect) running across all income bands fell within the narrow range of 6 to 9 per cent. Furthermore, the majority of families paid about 90 per cent of the taxes collected from the taxpaying public. But as the calculations demonstrate, "material" benefits from governmental expenditures for the defence and maintenance of Empire went first and overwhelmingly to social groups within the United Kingdom at the top end of the income scale (earning £1,000 a year and above), who paid a disproportionately small share of the taxes required to keep that supra-national enterprise going. Second, they accrued to the heavily "subsidized" residents of the white Dominions and to the dependent colonies.

What this latter point comes down to is hard quantitative support for a very old argument, namely that British taxpayers bore the lion's share of the costs of defending the Empire. From 1860 to 1914 on a per capita basis, the military expenditures funded by citizens of the United Kingdom were more than double the levels borne by Americans, Frenchmen, Germans, Scandinavians and other Europeans. Despite the fact that from the time of the American Revolution onwards the Treasury had attempted with out success to ensure that all regions of the Empire contributed as much as possible towards their own defence, only for India (the Jewel in the Crown) was that policy implemented *à la lettre*. Indian taxpayers underwrote direct military costs on the subcontinent and funded the costs of Indian regiments stationed in other parts of the Empire. Even so, Indian historians may mute their complaints because the absolute sums involved amounted

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typically to about half of the taxes imposed for military purposes on the citizens of other undeveloped countries. The colonies contributed insignificant proportions of their budgets towards defence.

Citizens of the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland secured a particularly good deal from the imperial connection. Although their taxes were high (on average 68 per cent of United Kingdom levels) their expenditures (per capita) on defence add up to only 10 per cent of the levels assumed by their kith and kin who remained in the mother country. Furthermore, "colonials" enjoyed favoured access to loans on the London capital market, occasional grants in aid, cheap services from the Crown Agents and subsidies from the imperial communications network. All these transfers allowed Dominion (and also colonial) governments to allocate high proportions of their own revenues for public works, for health and education and for the enforcement of systems of free-enterprise property rights. India apart, the residents of Dominions and (to a lesser extent) the colonies derived tangible economic benefits from expenditures of their governments on local "development" that were (by

international standards of the time) lavish. Such generous levels of support and subsidy for imperial economics could not, and presumably would not, have been afforded by independent governments compelled to pay for the defence of peoples and territories under their jurisdiction. On the British side of this balance-sheet, if the Treasury had managed to shift the entire burden of local defence on to revenues raised in the Dominions and colonies, then taxes collected from citizens of the United Kingdom might have been reduced by anything up to 43 per cent.

Prime facie, the new statistical evidence presented in *Mammoth* lends powerful support to that great but lost historical cause: the radical case against Empire. Davis and Huttenback must also be commended for offering us the numbers required to sharpen and reinvigorate a historical debate that goes back beyond Adam Smith to the blue-water school of British strategic thinking. Although their book is nothing less than seminal, it does not and cannot answer the question: did the Empire pay? Alas, that problem seems too big to tackle even by meticulous econometricians equipped with modern techniques and acute analytical minds. The authors will appreciate they have engaged

in what their own craft refers to as a series of partial equilibrium exercises, predicated upon a restricted and unreal counterfactual. *Mammoth* attempts to specify and to measure the incremental costs and extra benefits for British society imputable to the political arrangements and institutions of imperial rule. When the authors analyse patterns of overseas investment, returns on capital invested in the United Kingdom, foreign locations and Empire, relative tax burdens and actual subsidies, their implicit counterfactual is the free-trade universe of Cobden, Bright and Mill.

What might have happened to these variables (and, historians of the Empire will add, to labour migration and to the full range of items listed on the British balance of payments) if the Dominions, India and the colonies had become or remained politically independent from 1860 onwards? Davis and Huttenback assume that the nexus of international connections binding Britain to its Empire and the world economy to the British Empire would have remained roughly the same with or without the phenomenon of imperial rule. But even the radicals, like Fewcott and Thorold Rogers, took pride in the "Roman peace" Britain had imposed in India. Without the Raj,

what might have happened economically on that subcontinent from 1860 to 1914, or indeed to other territories and peoples under colonial rule? At the time even Mill believed (along with a majority of his compatriots) that the operation of the entire international economy derived significant externalities from the persistence of the British Empire.

If it was the case that the observed levels of global output and trade depended to some important degree upon the stability of imperial policy (and a hegemonic power) then logically gains to the British economy and British taxpayers — derived from augmented levels of international commerce contingent upon the status quo — should appear on the positive side of any ex-post cost-benefit analysis. Confronted with a counterfactual universe of incremental gains from trade and specialization flowing back into the British economy from that inseparable package of policies which constituted the Pax Britannica, imperial rule and blue-water defence policy, even the sharpest econometricians might retreat into smaller and more manageable problems. But it would be a shame to leave all the fun, the rhetoric and the inconclusiveness of debating grand themes to mere historians.

Thus Richard Sennett is unlikely to generate a school, though his is surely one of the most emphatically original of contemporary American talents. His novels are like nobody else's, yet each of them paradoxically makes a conclusion in the direction of clearly signposted literary and documentary sources. What we so snugly thought we knew about our culture is reinterpreted for us by the author as an area of hitherto unsuspected ambiguities and obfuscations.

Sennett has arrived at fiction via sociology, but if the voice of the seasoned academic is heard more obviously in *Palais-Royal* than in either of his earlier novels (*An Evening of Brains* and *The Frog Who Dared to Croak*), it is merely because of its almost self-defeating inclusiveness. The title of Hardy's story "A Tragedy of Two Ambitions" might well be applied to the story of Frederick and Charles Courtland, nineteenth-century English brothers whose growing love affair with Paris and matters Perisian leads to deconstruction not necessarily followed by regeneration.

Frederick is an architect, commissioned to

## Tale of two cities

Jonathan Keates

RICHARD SENNETT  
*Palais-Royal*  
214pp. Faber. £10.95.  
057147186

American fiction has seldom seemed more unmistakably American than it does just now. The process currently being enacted is, in a sense, a return to the old frontier, with its innocence and lawlessness holding alien sophistication at bay amid the sublimities of wild nature. The Daniel Boones and Davy Crockets of the novel are staking out their territories, maintaining independence against all comers and asserting a sacrosanct individualism.

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Frederick is an architect, commissioned to

assist in the building of the Galerie d'Orléans, a new iron and glass arcade in the Palais-Royal. Charles, a rural clergyman, quits the Church to found *The Free Thinker*, the upshot of an authentic *crise de foi*. Their relationships with benevolent Uncle Snigs (real name, fraught with implications, Severus Rood) and with the French actress Anne Mercure and her daughter Adèle, form the connecting thread in a novel which disdains anything as simple as pure narrative in the ordering and refining of its material.

The book's dedication to the memory of Michel Foucault affords a hint as to its singular character. Using fiction to embarrass our hardened notions of what may or may not be a novel is no longer new — but the harnessing of modern socio-history *à la française* to the vehicle of romance here makes for some sudacious imaginative leaps.

Paris is the true protagonist. The Courtlands and their noble failures are more in the nature of wings thrown out from Sennett's real theme, that of the influence of a city not on its inhabitants alone but on an entire epoch and its developing culture. In comparison, London and its Great Exhibition, complete with Victoria and Albert beaming on kowtowing Chinese mandarins and peers walking backwards to the strains of the Hallelujah Chorus, are shown as something not far distant from the provincial parish Foucault and his fellow savants scorned in our own day.

A positively Arnoldian irony underscores the polarity. Charles and Frederick are, or at any rate become, resonantly Victorian in their agonized broodings, but it seems that this topical identity can only be effectively realized against a background of the *ville de la lumière* in full Balzacian spate.

Sennett shows a warmly enthusiastic understanding of French Romanticism, still imperfectly appreciated in France and elsewhere, and generous portions of cultural history are folded into the text. The *bataille d'Hernani*, the

salon of the Comtesse d'Agout, the mysterious suicide of the great tenor Adolphe Nourrit, and figures such as Liszt, Hugo and George Sand take their place alongside the clinics and letters of Anne Mercure, a fully realized doyenne of the Parisian stage, who belongs as much to James's *The Tragic Muse* as to the age of Rachel and Harriet Smithson.

The style of the documents from which the work is assembled plainly aims at period flavour, though without a suggestion of direct pastiche. If a character decides to digress, he whisks us along with him into a disquisition on Byron or the nature of the tickets for Chopin's

## Relatively relaxed

Alice H. G. Phillips

JOHN ASHBERRY and JAMES SCHUYLER  
*A Nest of Ninnies*  
191pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £11.95.  
085635 6999

When the poets John Ashbery and James Schuyler first published their collaborative novel in 1969, the New York School was at its ninest. The novel's characters are shallow but interestingly capricious; the prose is sprightly, and the plot crammed with amusing coincidences, odd romances, swift scene changes and festive occasions. If one reads it in order to discover the roots of Ashbery's meditations on subjectivity in, for example, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, one reads with the wrong attitude. W. H. Auden was sure that the book, with its happy air of total inconsequentiality, was "destined to become a minor classic".

The action may veer off to Florida's Everglades or to Parisian nightclubs beloved of tourists, but the novel's emotional home is well-to-do Keltan, New York, fifty fictional miles from Manhattan. Keltan, with its relatively relaxed commuters and only mildly restless idlers, is not in Updike country; despite the bling title the book intends no social criticism and contains few malicious observations. Keltan is pictured as a pleasant haven, if a trifle lacking in imagination. New York offers no contrast to its cheerful suburban philistinism.

## Desperately dependent

Anthony Storr

STUART SUTHERLAND  
*Men Change Too*  
205pp. Duckworth. £10.95.  
0715620711

Stuart Sutherland, Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Sussex, is best known for his book *Breakdown* (1971), an unusually honest account of his own mental illness. Simon Gray has used it as the basis of a play, *Mefist*, which is currently running at the Haymarket Theatre (and was reviewed in the TLS of July 3).

*Men Change Too* is Sutherland's first novel. It is the story of a fifty-seven-year-old psychiatrist, Euan Macrorie, who has been abandoned by his wife and who embarks on a love affair with a twenty-eight-year-old German girl. Like many first novels, *Men Change Too* is transparently autobiographical. The first letter which Macrorie receives from the girl refers to his having been a patient in a mental hospital. Anyone who has read *Breakdown* will recognize that Macrorie's only difference from Sutherland is that he is portrayed as a psychiatrist rather than as an experimental psychologist. This gives Sutherland the opportunity to repeat and expand, with considerable humour, the attacks upon the profession of psychiatry, especially psychoanalysis, which were a feature of his earlier book.

His self-portrait is unsparring. Macrorie is pictured as untidy, dirty, slovenly, obese and self-indulgent. Unfaithful himself, he is nevertheless racked with jealousy at the thought of

last concert, but the precision of detail cannot always avoid anachronism. Nubody in 1840, for example, talked of their "beauty sleep", the surname Lusie was not yet in use as a Christian name, and Frederick's enthusiasm for the nature of shadows in the piazza at San Gimignano is unconvincingly Ruskin *avant la lettre*.

None of this would especially matter if Sennett knew less about the age itself. Out of his perceptions he has, in any case, created a work ideally calculated to seduce those far whom the novel remains too limiting a genre. As with everything he writes the outcome of his experiments is obstinately unpredictable.

ism — the city is merely where you go to grow around at the office or to have your hair styled. (The Ninnies are by no means uncultivated, however; they can *bon mots*, read Proust and play the cello, albeit with a slightly jejune air.) When they troop over to Europe *en masse* for a holiday, their essential emptiness should perhaps stand out in sharper relief. But the Frenchmen and Italians they meet are much like themselves, running on cockle and *jeu de vivre*. Several of the Americans end up taking foreign spouses; Keltan expands to fill the world.

The book was highly artificial when it was written, and seems that much more removed from life twenty years later, on its first publication in Britain. The bickering brother-sister pairs of Marshall and Alice and Victor and Fabia; Irving Kelson and his mother and her dog Fluffy; Claire, the international perfume saleswoman, and Paul, the test driver of racing cars; all belong along in a sparkling current with never a hint of Vietnam or the sexual revolution or other contemporary tidal disturbances. It feels like the 1950s, or even the 1930s; the reader is deeply shocked to come across a simile making use of the Apollo space shots, and a rock band called Abel and the Antibodies.

A strong sense of the authors' complicity pervades these easy, unreal adventures of the prosperous and silly. Ashbery and Schuyler's stance grows more dubious as the book goes on, and the fun tends to wear thin as the end approaches, with no comic redemption in sight.

his wife's infidelity. He smokes and drinks too much, behaves arrogantly and rudely to colleagues, and is often domineering and insensitive. His early, considerable promise has not been fulfilled, and he has almost abandoned research. Isolated by both his intelligence and his intolerance of stupidity in others, he is yet intensely dependent, and cannot bear to be alone. As he becomes increasingly involved with his German mistress, Elvira, he turns to two of his remaining friends for advice, a male sculptor and a former mistress. They are supportive and clearly fond of him, in spite of all his faults.

The story moves between Brighton, where Sutherland now works, and Oxford, which was his alma mater. The inevitable end of the affair is convincing, and sometimes touchingly, described.

Although the novel contains some episodes which are moving, and others which are hilarious, I cannot feel that Sutherland's vocation is that of a novelist. The book constantly reminded me of the novels of C. P. Snow. Snow was an extremely accurate portrait painter of people he knew; but, because he lacked a particular kind of creative imagination, his characters were apt to appear wooden. The same is true of *Men Change Too*. The book reads like a subjective account of recent events which have not been exposed to the revivifying effects of subjective fantasy.

What is most remarkable about this novel is Sutherland's self-portrait. Few writers have drawn themselves, warts and all, with such uncompromising honesty. There is something desperate in this: perhaps a plea for a kind of acceptance of the worst in him which the author may feel he has never had.

## Standing up for Keynes

A. P. Thirlwall

GORDON A. FLETCHER  
*The Keynesian Revolution and Its Critics: Issues of theory and policy for the monetary production economy*  
348pp. Macmillan. £35.  
0333 417410

Joseph Schumpeter once said that "practical Keynesianism is a seedling which cannot be translated into foreign soil; it dies hard there and becomes poisonous before it dies". Schumpeter was jealous of Keynes, but the same sentiments have been expressed about the *General Theory* — that it was somehow the product of its time and place and has now lost its relevance. Some economists seem to be of the view, in particular, that Keynesian theory cannot explain "stagflation". Many disagree, including Gordon A. Fletcher, who in this important book seeks to explain and justify the Keynesian revolution and to defend Keynes against his various critics.

The object of the *General Theory* was to explain how free-enterprise capitalist economies could get stuck with large volumes of involuntary unemployment without sticky wages and prices, and without interest rates having reached a minimum. Keynes's message is as relevant today as it ever was, especially as it becomes clearer that the succession of critiques of his fundamental macro-theory have led nowhere: monetarism and the new classical macroeconomics, based on the supposition that expectations are "rational, have left their legacy, but lie now in shallow graves.

Keynes was always interested primarily in economic policy, but there is no doubt that he wanted his *magnus opus* to be a revolution in theory. Fletcher puts at the heart of that revolution his treatment of money and the rate of interest, and the undermining of Say's Law which says that saving is spending. Money increases the efficiency of an economy, but it also increases its potential instability by driving a wedge into the savings-investment decision; money is held as an asset for its own sake; a decision not to have dinner today (ie not to spend today) is not a decision to have a dinner at some predetermined date in the future; the rate of interest is not the price that equilibrates saving and investment; saving does not necessarily lead to investment, certainly not necessary for investment to take place. Keynes contrasted his world of monetary uncertainty with the purely abstract world of classical theory, with its assumptions of perfect information and direct exchange; the new classical theory of pre-empting that the present can be understood without reference either to the past or to an uncertain future.

Having broken the classical nexus between savings and investment, Keynes was forced to offer a new theory of the rate of interest, which he did in terms of liquidity preference. His

main critic in this was Dennis Robertson, who attempted to integrate real and monetary factors in the doctrine of "loanable funds", which added the supply and demand for money to the supply and demand for saving. Keynes could not accept this because it still implied acceptance of the view that saving leads to investment. Later he seemed willing to concede that productivity and thrift would affect the rate of interest indirectly as determinants of the "normal" rate of interest against which the rate of interest on monetary assets is compared. He also conceded that finance would be necessary to bridge the gap between investment and accrued saving, since the process of income generation (the multiplier) is not instantaneous.

Fletcher deals with this debate in considerable detail, coming down in support of Keynes against the loanable funds theory. He, like Keynes, accuses Robertson of failing to understand the nature of saving and the paradox of thrift, and of confusing saving and money. Slightly surprisingly, Fletcher fails to mention the significant contributions made in this field by Nicholas Kaldor in his papers on "Speculation and Economic Stability" (1939) and "Keynes's Theory of the Own Rates of Interest" (1960), which resolved many of these controversies early on. In generalizing Keynes's theory of the multiplier, Kaldor intro-

## Mysterious relationships

Mica Panić

PHILIP GEDDES  
*Inside the Bank of England*  
179pp. Bantam. £12.95.  
1 85283 203 7

Although the sensitive nature of their work makes all central bankers highly secretive, there is nothing mysterious about their tasks or the way in which these tasks are normally performed. Over the years a vast literature has built up which analyses their responsibilities and conduct in considerable detail. Nevertheless, it is extremely rare to be able to observe from the inside the reaction of a central bank to a particular problem, or to hear its senior officials comment on a course of action while it is still taking place. Yet to some extent, this is precisely what happened last year when "The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street", better known as the Bank of England, allowed a team from TV South to make a documentary (to be shown this autumn) about it. Philip Geddes, the programme director, put together the book *Inside the Bank of England* as part of the project.

To anyone familiar with the Bank, the most remarkable thing about this experiment in openness is the apparent degree of freedom granted to the author and his team. This seems

duced the stabilizing influence of speculators in the bond market, and Keynes agreed that this was likely to be the major theoretical explanation of the income multiplier. On re-reading Kaldor's 1939 paper, Sir John Hicks wrote to its author: "I think that your paper was the culmination of the Keynesian revolution in theory. You ought to have had more honour for it."

Fletcher goes on to defend Keynes against the challenge of the Austrian school of economists, past and present. Hayek, particularly, comes in for a lot of stick. Brought to the London School of Economics as a bulwark against Keynes and Cambridge, Hayek held different views from Keynes on the trade cycle, but never provided a systematic critique of his work, ostensibly because Keynes was always changing his mind. Fletcher could have emphasized that so too was Hayek. Having argued in the early 1930s that the capital intensity of production increased on the upswing of the cycle, which then caused adjustment problems as credit was curtailed, Hayek then argued in his 1939 book, *Profits, Interest and Investment*, the exact opposite, that employers would seek more labour intensive methods of production. Hayek and his followers blame the present stagnation of Western economies (after thirty years of prosperity) on Keynesian inflationist policies, but Fletcher has no difficulty in showing

ing that Keynes was not an "inflationist". On the contrary, he espoused monetary stability and balanced budgets on current account. Nor was Keynes unmindful of the threat posed by individual liberty by the expansion of the state which the logic of his theory demanded (and which, indeed, was part of the revolution); but he regarded full employment as a precondition for freedom and liberty and the "socialisation of investment" as the benign solution for liberal capitalism in the face of massive market failure.

Fletcher has no trouble defending Keynes against the monetarists, whose theories have been totally discredited by the accumulated evidence where they have been applied in recent years. The basic problem with monetarism has always been its refusal to recognize cost-push inflation (coupled with the fact that in a credit economy the money supply can easily respond to the needs of trade) and the persistence of involuntary unemployment over long periods of time, because workers are not in a position to determine their own real wage. Keynes's break with classical labour-market assumptions was a dramatic part of the revolution, and might possibly have been better coming at the beginning of the book rather than the end. Fletcher's book should be compulsory reading for both sympathizers and critics of Keynes alike.

ordinary central bank.

After all, the Bank of England, established in 1694, is one of the oldest institutions of its kind. Moreover, for most of the nineteenth century, during the period of Britain's industrial and financial supremacy, it had an influence on international finance and economic affairs of a kind that is unlikely ever again to be exercised by a national central bank. As such, it has served as a model for similar institutions throughout the world.

It is Geddes's discussion of the Bank's relationship with the government and the City and of its role in promoting wide-ranging changes now taking place in the City (exemplified by the "Big Bang"), along with his speculations about the probable long-term consequences of these reforms, that are likely to be of particular interest. Geddes appears to have based his account on extensive interviews with the most senior officials of the Bank, as well as with senior figures in the City and past Treasury ministers. He provides, therefore, some insight into the "mysterious" way in which these informal relationships work — something that seems to have eluded most outside observers (including various parliamentary committees).

For all these reasons, the book can be recommended to anyone intrigued by what is going on behind those high, forbidding walls of Threadneedle Street.



## Slide sections

### Lindsay Duguid

PENELOPE FARMER  
Away From Home  
184pp. Gollancz. £10.95.  
0575040274

Penelope Farmer believes in the *genius loci*: for her heroine Elinor, states are also mental states and landscapes shimmer with intense emotion. *Away From Home* contains ten chapters, neatly labelled – “In a German Pension (Munich, 1957)”, “Honeycoun (Dordogne, 1962)”, “Talking about Jerusalem (Israel, May 1977)”, “The Navaho (Northern Arizona, August 1983)” – and each marking a momentous apprehension. They are not so much slides as slide sections of a woman's trips abroad and the confusions they engender.

On honeycoun, a visit to a vampire novelist inspires forebodings (and nausea, shyness and heart) about her marriage. On a family holiday in France, against a background of dripping trees and quarrels about cooking, anger impels her to beat her mother-in-law at billiards. In Santa Fe for a conference in 1973,

she shares her literary enthusiasms of the period – Lewis Carroll, William Blake – with a burnt-out hippy stranger and experiences bliss. In India during Holi with her lover, she is set on by youths, and rage and fear combine: “I always suspected men really hated women. And now I know they do.” A sense of identity, if not self-awareness, is demonstrated on a journey into the desert with her grown-up daughter. In all these places the impetus for the feeling comes as much from incidental anxieties as from wider issues: “You know what I hate most; it's the horrible flared trousers you see all the Indians wearing. I hate them worse than the poverty and the beggars, even.”

Elinor's life's journeys, which take her from awkward adolescence to the uncertainties of middle age, also move beyond the well-known tourist centres of Europe to wider horizons. The *penusins* and *gives* give way to kibbutz, aloha and tent: the further away from civilization, the nearer to reality. To illustrate how far she has come we are shown extracts from her mawkish letters to her future husband from Florence in 1959. We even get a picture of the disaffected husband himself in the novel's only English chapter, “The Bench (Dorset, 1968)”, a devastating evocation of exhaustion and de-

spair on a stony beach with two young children – grey pebbles, orange plastic beaker, disposable nappies, paperback Aldous Huxley. Amid the detritus, Elinor reads “The Sleeping Beauty” to her child: “In fairy tales people who marry frogs or ugly beasts discover princes and princesses in their beds thereafter. It is only in real life they marry princes and princesses and wake one day to find them turned into frogs, or worse.”

The uniting of general theme with particular experience, neatly contrived in this instance, is not always so successful, and it is perhaps a weakness of the book's structure that we begin to have a little too much of the adventurer, not enough of the adventures. It is hard to sympathize with Elinor's plight as she progresses towards her personal liberation, overcoming cancer and self-doubt, surrounded by those who admire her candour. “You always fall on your feet”, says one friend; “You are the only person I know”, says another, “who can contrive to have her cake and eat it.” However, in delineating Elinor's confused responses to art and life, and in her sketching in of the shades of love and lust which obstruct the view, Penelope Farmer comes close at times to creating a modern-day Lucy Honeychurch.

## On the slant

### Mark Casserley

GEOFFREY CUSH  
God Help the Queen  
148pp. Abacus. £8.95.  
0349 106703  
PATRICK GALE  
Kansas in August  
140pp. Century. £9.95.  
07126 15342

In Geoffrey Cush's first novel, *God Help the Queen*, the year is 2003, and Britain, under the successor of “Norman St. Margaret”, is swarming with US military personnel. The aged Queen has become a privatized irrelevance, and her unemployed subjects, whose bread has been converted into shares in fiction companies, wait aimlessly in huge urban dumping-grounds. The active powers here are Edward Vane, a Palace official; Peter Pounce, a former schoolteacher who runs a boys' community in a disused mill on Regent's Park Canal; and Pounce's sexual rival, Major Max Garbo, Liaison Officer to the British Government.

Vane is desperate: his lover's son is dying of leukaemia, and he attempts to raise the vast sum of money needed for treatment, first by using Pounce's boys to push cocaine, and then by persuading the Queen to back a Monarchist party. He hopes that a frightened government will buy him off, and he and Pounce blackmail Garbo to this end, using his seduction of Damon, a teenager from the North, in whom Pounce is also interested. The new party fails, but the money is forthcoming nevertheless; Pounce gets Damon into bed, before they are both murdered; the existing order is left unchanged, except that US Army convoys no longer use the Mall on Sundays.

*Kansas in August*, Patrick Gale's third novel, concerns itself, by contrast, with the emotional crises of the main characters, and its intensified version of the present – mugging, urban squalor, public-sector strikes – remains background to these. Hilary has been trying to make a career as a dancer, and fills in time as teacher; he rescues an abandoned baby, and is in the process of adopting it, when it is taken away by the Department of Health and Social Security. Hilary's lover, Rufus, is a failed musician earning money from piano lessons and his sexual services, while claiming benefit. Hilary's sister, Henry, a psychiatrist charged with making her patients ready for the outside world, adopts a new identity, “Sandy”, and begins an affair with Rufus. As the couple prepare to leave for France, where Henry has a new job, Hilary is knocked down by a lorry, which, with thumping irony, crushes his leg.

The action of both books takes place in London, but there are other similarities: in each case, a great building is falling into disrepair (Buckingham Palace, and Princess Marina's Hospital); both have as a main character a sexually adventurous but emotionally uninvolved woman doctor, while at the same time homosexuality takes centre stage. More importantly, in both books there is an uneasy authority: the United States for Cush, the DHSS for Gale, and this is part of a setting that is related to, but aslant from, contemporary life – the consistency of vision which would create a genuine dystopia is missing.

These rather similar worlds are put to very different uses. Cush's book is the more ambitious; its satirical projection into the future is closer in tone to Angus Wilson's *The Old Man at the Zoo* than Nineteen Eighty-Four, and might be argued that it has too much of response to trends in recent politics, and too little of historical vision. Some of the disparate narrative elements (the high-level political discussions, for example) are just not credible. These are matched by more promising material; however, the Queen's life at the Palace, with a lady-in-waiting who is converting her to Buddhism, has elements of Mervyn Perle's chaotic, rubbish-filled, violent streets of London are something Gale's characters have to struggle with, and the detail of their passage through this world is the most effective thing in his book – their emotional predicaments fall to grip. In both novels, to fact, characters and style have a perfunctory air, as though every thing had been leached out by the squalor and menacing settings.

low-abiding as the retaliations of the disaffected Irish: in particular, one Lachie Dubh who keeps appearing in a fearsome attitude, and stands wielding a cudgel like something out of a folk tale. Compromise, even though it isn't taken very far, is understood by some to be the most profitable policy in the circumstances. A social gathering at Rathdun House shows what civilities are possible between the old and the new inhabitants of the district. Turlough MacCartan and his harper O'Daly are present at a banquet given for the Lord Deputy in Ireland, but don't seem especially overawed by the occasion. When the ancient harper's voice is raised in a lament, Neil Gilchrist finds he has sufficient Gaelic to understand that O'Daly isn't praising the company he is keeping. There are, in fact, many Gaelic poems disparaging the lineage and the manners of the new arrivals: “rabble”, “upstarts” and “foreign trash” are some of the terms these poems go on for.

Sam Hanna Bell notes the origins of the divisiveness that has bedevilled the province ever since, and applauds honourable or reasonable behaviour wherever it occurs. His novel, given its abundance of characters and incidents, can do no more than this, and it's perhaps unfair to look for a subtler or a stronger sense of the oddity of the past. The past, as it is presented here, is racy and picturesque, and full of people with well-defined traits.

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that she must be recording them on to an endless tape – and of the stories she tells herself to keep her own fears at bay. Each of the four stories, deftly placed to vary the rhythm of the monologue, emerges as a reflection of the woman's own insecurity, her concern for her children, her private obsessions. It is these starkly realistic little tales which give the book its edgy brilliance.

Each story is of a conventional domestic tragedy. A father learns that his adored little daughter isn't his and that the only way he'll ever get near her again is by peering, like a pevert, through the school playground fence. A daughter whose life has been sucked away in caring for a tyrannical invalid mother lives only for the old woman's death, and when it comes, has nothing left to live for. A woman sits the throat of her retarded child to save him from the violence of her brutish boyfriend. A girl who desperately wants a child gets pregnant, and grows obsessed with the idea of a monstrous insect with glistening wings, trapped and fluttering in her flesh, a dream turned nightmare.

The stories are Marion's way of breaking the ice which has hardened over her mind, numbing her into a state of deadly apathy. The mental state is, a bit crudely, externalized towards the end of the book when the water in the pool

## In the hands of the undertakers

### Patricia Craig

SAM HANNA BELL  
Across the Narrow Sea  
209pp. Blackstaff. £10.95.  
08564013776

Sam Hanna Bell's new novel opens in 1608, the year after English and Scottish settlers began to pour into Ulster to take over the lands of the native Irish who had fought on the losing side in the battle of Kinsale. The forfeited lands were parcelled out to “undertakers”, who promptly established settlements and went about the business of administration, while the ex-owners and their retainers, in many cases, stayed around to ensure that the incomers didn't have too easy a time of it. The planter families, forced to defend themselves and their new property, experienced danger and instability from the outset. Here you have the origins of the “siege mentality” that assumed such prominence in the Ulster Protestant psyche; while Catholic Ulster sustained itself on a powerful sense of injustice and persecution.

*Across the Narrow Sea* begins with a quarrel between a cantankerous Scottish laird and his younger son, Neil Gilchrist, who immediately heads for London and the Court of King James. He is diverted before he has gone very far out of Ayrshire, and ends up in Ravara, Co

Down, where he falls in with a peasant family named MacIvlen who are separating themselves from a high-handed landlord. The author's first point is that few of the ordinary families arriving in Northern Ireland, where the prospect of a rewarding life was held out to them, understood the rights and wrongs of the dispossession issue, or felt themselves to be fit objects for native hostility. “If the land's fit for working we're fit to work it”: this was the common, pragmatic attitude.

The “undertaker” in charge of Ravara – once owned by the Gaelic MacCartans, a tribe not entirely dispossessed, though considerably diminished – is a Scotsman named Kenneth Echlin whose house, Rathard, is one of those destined to go up in flames in the native Irish uprising of 1641. We learn as much from the novel's sole reference to a future event; Bell's primary concern is to show a planter community in the process of putting down roots, building, engaging in commerce, cultivating the land. Neil Gilchrist, a one-time law student, is set to tending the woodlands of Ravara: a fateful appointment. Social ambitions, danger, conflict, personal antagonisms, interludes for romance – all have a place in the energetic narrative, in which all the characters are constantly on the go.

While the MacIvlen's embody the planter propensity for setting to work with a will, and producing results, there are other, rogue Scots whose viciousness is as much a threat to the

## To the north

### Miranda Seymour

JANE ROGERS  
The Ice Is Singing  
153pp. Faber. £9.95.  
0571 147720

Jane Rogers is not the first writer to have used a long car journey to suggest suspended time or a period in purgatory, but she bestows a welcome freshness on the familiar by an original narrative trick of juxtaposing universal onocrotic with self-interrogation.

The story, or rather stories, emerge from the consciousness of Marion, a woman of unspecified age who has abandoned her baby twins with her sister and started driving north on a bleak February night. She has no sense of where she is going or what she wants.

– She didn't want. Not at all. No intention of reaching journey's end, thank you. No interest in peace and freedom. No desire for tranquillity or angel choirs.

Trapped in motion like a rat on a wheel. You can only move or stop moving. And the only place you can arrive at by moving is somewhere else where you must either stop or move on.

The novel is presented as a journal of her thoughts as she drives – we're left to assume

## Victorian values exposed

### Julian Symons

DAVID GRYLIS  
The Paradox of Gissing  
226pp. Allen and Unwin. £20.  
004 800817

David Grylls begins with a firework display of paradoxes in Gissing. Contempt/compassion for the poor, envy/disdain for the rich, feminism blended with misogyny, arrogance about his own talent joined with disgust at failure to use it fully: these are all recognizable to anyone who has dipped more than a toe into the novels, but they are set out more clearly here than in any other study. Throughout his career Gissing struggled to find some ultimate reality about the nature of society, the truths or deceptions of religion, the qualities of civilization. Reality for him was always the sum of his own confusions, and the substance of his novels is the attempt to make them cohere. This was difficult particularly because the confusions were those of his life as well as his art, and the life tended to get in the way of the work so that his central characters often seem to behave as Gissing might have done or wished to do in a given situation. The minor figures similarly are frequently energized by ideas that have caught the author's attention, and attracted a kind of half-belief not excluding doubt, rather than by actions appropriate to their characters. As Dr Grylls says in his witty conclusion, there is a very good reason why Gissing excels at capturing weakness and doubt, and realizing characters who are embodied contradictions. “The figure he was stalking was himself.”

The central paradox of Gissing is, however, one not directly noticed here: that his aspirations did not fit his gifts. He looked longingly at

a life of scholarship, yearned for an unattainable and largely illusory classical past, and transferred these romantic feelings into his relations with women. In his life the results were two disastrous marriages, and the alliance with Gabrielle Fleury that brought considerable though not unalloyed happiness to his last five years. In literary terms his romanticism was responsible for passages of woozy sentimentality, like some of those between Piers Otway and Irene in *The Crown of Life* (begun just after meeting Gabrielle), for the dismal sixteenth-century historical romance *Vernilda*, left uncompleted at his death, and above all for his last published work, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, professedly written by a man in his fifties who has come into a legacy enabling him to retire to a Devonshire cottage. Ryecroft's reflections, reminiscences and speculations were regarded by Edwardian critics as the peak of Gissing's achievement, “the fullest expression of the poetry within him” as the TLS reviewer said. Today the eulogies of rural life seem commonplace or tedious, the speculations are expressed more forcefully in Gissing's diaries and correspondence, and the whimsical-historical-antique-laid-deckle-edge style that overruns it all makes the book read like a blend of a Robert Lynd essay and J. C. Squire in his Solomon Eagle incarnation, a truly horrifying combination.

Gissing's style in his finest work hardly exists: it is one of his virtues that in the sequence of books beginning in 1887 with *Thyrza* and ending a decade later with *The Whirlpool* he set down an unrelenting opposition to the things he hated about Victorian Britain in the plainest, clearest prose. They included every kind of commercial activity (only tolerable when pursued by those with an “unmercantile soul”), cheap newspapers, most weekly jour-

nalism, advertising, every aspect of life informed by the profit motive, all the things in fact that made Britain such an agreeable country for the broad-bottomed middle class. Gissing's writing during this decade has a power and intensity equal to that of any Victorian novelist. The masterpieces are *New Grub Street* and his most savage attack on Victorian commercialism, *In the Year of Jubilee*, but *The Odd Women*, *The Neither World* and *Born in Exile* are almost as good. Of these novels only the first is justly famous as a view of the lower levels of the literary life, but the others all contain memorable characters like the sadistic Clementina Peckover (*The Neither World*) who eats sausages with a knife and meditates gleefully on the fun she will have in tormenting a young girl servant; the Penchey sisters of *In the Year of Jubilee*, “in physical conflict, vilifying each other like the female spawn of Whitechapel”; and Godwin Penke of *Born in Exile*, a central character who for once transcends his origins in Gissing's life. Above all the scholar *unwieldy* excels in describing the London he detested, putting down the details of houses, shops, pubs, streets in Brixton and Camberwell, Brondesbury and Pinner, with marvellous exactness. *Born in Exile* and *New*

*Grub Street* receive detailed analysis from Grylls who, intent to make his points about paradox in Gissing, also gives much more attention to the clumsy early novels than literary grounds warrant.

Gissing's last books, written when his circumstances were easier and his life happier, show his inability to handle characters living comfortable lives. *The Crown of Life* has some good scenes set within the unfortunate central romance, like that in which Irene breaks her engagement to the worldly Arnold Jacks, but like *Our Friend the Charlatan* it is a novel uncertain of its objectives, lacking altogether the intensity of the work done in the great decade. The limitation even of the memorable novels is that a style so plain, a realism so determinedly literal, can only take writer and reader so far. Henry James, in a finely perceptive short piece about the novels, viewed Gissing as “the authority” on the lower and lowest middle class, praised his saturation in the material he used, but deprecated an almost complete lack of form. “It is firm above all that is talent, and if Mr Gissing's were proportionate to his knowledge . . . we should have a larger force to reckon with.” That is the limitation: but still, the achievement was unique.

## Novel inquiries

### John Mullan

GEOFFREY DAY  
From Fiction to the Novel  
223pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £17.95.  
07102 09118  
EVETAYLOR  
Scepticism, Society and the Eighteenth-Century Novel  
273pp. Macmillan. £27.50.  
0333 400143

*Eighteenth-Century Novel* is more ambitious and less enlightening. It begins from the same recognition that “the novel” was not a self-evident genre for most of the eighteenth century, and argues that the precedents for the fictions of Defoe, Richardson, Fielding and Sterne are to be found outside literature in a so-called “eighteenth-century sceptical tradition”. The attempt to understand the pretensions of fiction alongside philosophy's projects of moral and social inquiry is rightly part of the “sociology” of a literary form which this book declares itself to be. However, in criticizing a model of novels as expressions of “middle-class” ideology, Taylor produces just as simplified a paradigm. “Scepticism” is made to embrace writers as diverse as Locke, Mandeville and Shaftesbury – a disabling generalization of the term. And then such philosophy is taken as a privileged explanation of the fiction by means of assertions that come just too easily: “Locke is the key to the narrative design of Defoe's novels”; “Fielding uses Hume's doctrines of probability and belief.” The book presumes the “direct causal influences” from philosophy to fiction that are rejected in its introduction. This produces some suspect connections (Shaftesbury's influence on Richardson?), but also blinds it to an implication of its own, often acute, analyses of particular fictions: that novels could make better sense of the world than philosophy. They might have been, as Geoffrey Day shows, defensive of their novelty; but they gripped, as well as bemused, their readers because they had powers which other kinds of polite literature lacked.

In the eighteenth century, novels were novelities – boasts of their special powers and insecure about their suspect reputations. They once seemed loosened from precedent – innovating beyond recognized moral consolations, yet too anxious for respectability to offer coherent social criticism. Once, indeed, they had in common most of all the habit of disavowing the label of “novel”, suggestive as it was of vulgar, even immoral, excitements. It is from an observation of this self-denial that both these histories of eighteenth-century fiction begin. Both seek to recapture what was the moral as well as aesthetic uncertainty of a genre with which we are too familiar; both seek to recover the impact in the eighteenth century of the newness of novels.

Geoffrey Day's *From Fiction to the Novel* is an account of the definitions offered by eighteenth-century novelists of the nature of their fictions, and a compilation of the variously bemused or censorious responses of contemporary readers and critics. It is a report from the archive rather than a work of literary criticism, and is best at showing not just how novels were understood, but the ways in which they were not understood. Much of the book is quotation – a record of the vocabulary available to make sense of this new cultural phenomenon. Sometimes this can seem excessive: we are given a 10,000-word slab of James Beattie's “On Fable and Romance”, perhaps too much space for an essay significant for the failure of its taxonomy and the predictability of its moralism. But then it gets highlighted precisely because the period of the “rise of the novel” saw few such sustained attempts to subject fiction to the authority of literary criticism.

And even if anthology sometimes takes the place of argument in Day's book, his collection does usefully correct some of the assumptions about the coherence of a genre with which histories of the novel have worked. It demonstrates not merely the confusion of readers, but how that confusion conditioned the aspirations of the novelists. The new fiction of the eighteenth century was always having to justify itself, and its pretensions to moral instruction were determined by its development. *From Fiction to the Novel* does enough to show that a history of expectation and reception, for which it provides some of the material, must be a part of any coherent history of the novel.

Eve Taylor's *Scepticism, Society and the*

hero explains in his post-bomb dialect, “That's why I finely come to writing all this down. Thinking on what the idea of us myt be.”

Writings about the bomb have their antecedents in chthonic prophecy. Dowling devotes an entire chapter to apocalypse and revelation. It is perhaps his desire to trace this lineage that leads him to skirt the issue of meaning and middle three important issues which its distinctiveness is observed. The three are the biblical apocalypse (the Day of Judgment), the Nazi extermination programme, and the Big Bang itself.

Dowling illustrates his study with eight of Diderot's famous engravings of the Book of Revelation, which he takes as a text alongside *Gravity's Rainbow*. The problem, however, is that Revelation does not depict a nuclear cataclysm. Dowling's error is clearest when he quotes the apocryphal Apocalypse of Paul:

And I saw other men and women covered in dust, and their faces were like blood, and they were in a pit of tar and brimstone, and they were running in a river of fire, and I asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said to me: They are those who have committed the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Dowling states that “the scene could have come directly from the streets of Hiroshima”. But it couldn't. Some of those whose faces were like blood on August 6, 1945, had not been less committed sins of iniquity; others had not. Punishment was inflicted upon guilty and innocent alike with complete indifference to personal culpability. By contrast the biblical end of the world, as the Day of Judgment, is full of meaning; indeed it delivers an awesome, retrospective meaning to the whole of a person's life. The paradox of deterrence is to be used. If weapons are not supposed to be used, their consequences are they will have been pointless, their consequence a futile end: not a day of judgment but the opposite, elimination by a misjudgment.

Can one write about such meaningfulness? One work that attempts to is Beckett's *Endgame*, which opens with four brief laughs and the word “Plinked”. Dowling does not discuss the play, although it includes the line, “I say to myself that the earth is extinguished; though I never saw it lit.” The play addresses the fullness of meaning, and the final sterility of purity. Dowling is right, that this cannot be all there is to say; but, however, the books that confront all disaster writing.

## Speculative apocalypses

### Anthony Barnett

DAVID DOWLING  
Fictions of Nuclear Disaster  
239pp. Macmillan. £27.50.  
0333 398173

David Dowling's *Fictions of Nuclear Disaster* is a survey of books written under the threat of the bomb. More than 250 works, including some earlier disaster writing, are mentioned, in what is sometimes a cataract of references. Dowling starts with H. G. Wells – who, in 1913, grasped the possibilities inherent in the “atomic degeneration in the heavy elements” – and attempts to bring the study up to date.

The survey is not chronologically organized. Dowling does not discern any evolution in the body of work he analyses. Instead he attempts a thematic appraisal. He considers the figure of the scientist, especially the “mad scientist”; he brings together descriptions of a post-nuclear world, and in another chapter assesses the way disaster is imagined. He discerns two basic strands: scientific fiction with an emphasis on informed speculation; and the more surreal response, whether satirical or apocalyptic. The best writing, he argues, “bridges” the two cultures implied here; and in his penultimate chapter he considers what he terms “Two Exemplary Fictions”: Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* and Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*.

Dowling argues that it is trite to say that the reality of complete nuclear devastation is beyond fiction. He criticizes Jonathan Schell for his suggestion in *The Fate of the Earth* that art, with its claim to timelessness, is undermined by the threat of extermination. On the contrary, Dowling concludes, art is essential in the face of such a possibility. A major part of his argument is that fictions about nuclear disaster may help humanity develop its imagination to the point of defusing its ultimate weapons.

But if Dowling is convincing about the need for, and importance of, “nuclear art”, his own approach is not entirely satisfactory. At the centre of his book is the idea of an end and a beginning: it is indeed a kind of paradox to try to describe an end to all meaning in language. The evident strain in a book like *Riddley Walker*, for example, is its necessary naivety. The

to *The British Novel since the Thirties: An introduction* (257pp. Batsford. £7.95. 0 7134 4663 3) Randall Stevenson has put his mind to writing an introduction, not a dispiriting book, and those who want a connected, unopinionated account of post-Modernist British fiction will appreciate it. His preference, however, is for experimental writing, and for those writers not unnerved by Joyce's success. His tolerance wears thin when he comes to the 1950s: it seems *Lucky Jim* didn't raise a smile. The book's radicalism is not in its opinions but in its democracy. Stevenson breaks down the hierarchy of critical fashion, giving equal attention to differing approaches and emphasizing their common concerns. Part of his purpose here is to liberate the 1930s from definitions to do with politics, propaganda and public address, and when discussing this period the quietist, personal, sometimes pastoral or fantastic themes that preoccupied so many at that time are given their proper weight. Stevenson's most prominent claim in this section is that Lewis Grassie Gibbon is the outstanding novelist of his age. For Stevenson, Gibbon's “communism of insight and utterance create an exact formal reflex for the left-wing ideology of the age”. It is the sort of praise usually reserved for Auden.

J. H. C. Thompson



## Slide sections

### Lindsay Duguid

PENELOPE FARMER  
Away From Home  
184pp. Gollancz. £10.95.  
0 575 04027 0

Penelope Farmer believes in the *genius loci*: for her heroine Elinor, states are also mental states and landscapes shimmer with intense emotion. *Away From Home* contains ten chapters, neatly labelled – "In a German Pension (Munich, 1957)", "Honeymonth (Dordogne, 1962)", "Talking about Jerusalem (Israel, May 1977)", "The Navaho (Northern Arizona, August 1983)" – and each marking a momentous apprehension. They are not so much slides as slide sections of a woman's trips abroad and the confusions they engender.

On honeymoon, a visit to a vampish novelist inspires forebodings (and nausea, shyness and heat) about her marriage. On a family holiday in France, against a background of dripping trees and quarrels about cooking, anger impels her to hunt her mother-in-law at billiards. In Santa Fe for a conference in 1973,

she shares her literary enthusiasms of the period – Lewis Carroll, William Blake – with a burnt-out hippy stranger and experiences bliss. In India during Holi with her lover, she is set on by youths, and rage and fear combine: "I always suspected men really hated women. And now I know they do." A sense of identity, if not self-awareness, is demonstrated on a journey into the desert with her grown-up daughter. In all these places the impetus for the feeling comes as much from incidental anxieties as from wider issues: "You know what I hate most; it's the horrible flared trousers you see all the Indians wearing. I hate them worse than the poverty and the beggars, even."

Elinor's life's journeys, which take her from awkward adolescence to the uncertainties of middle age, also move beyond the well-known tourist centres of Europe in wider horizons. The previous and gives give way to kibbutz, adobe and tent: the further away from civilization, the nearer to reality. To illustrate how far she has come we are shown extracts from her mawkish letters to her future husband from Florence in 1959. We even get a picture of the disaffected husband himself in the novel's only English chapter, "The Leach (Durset, 1968)", a devastating evocation of exhumation and de-

spair on a stony beach with two young children – grey pebbles, orange plastic beaker, disposable nappies, paperback Aldous Huxley. Amid the detritus, Elinor reads "The Sleeping Beauty" to her child: "In fairy tales people who marry frogs or ugly beasts discover princes and princesses in their beds thereafter. It is only in real life they marry princes and princesses and wake one day to find them turned into frogs, or worse."

The uniting of general theme with particular experience, neatly contrived in this instance, is not always so successful, and it is perhaps a weakness of the book's structure that we begin to have a little too much of the adventurer, not enough of the adventures. It is hard to sympathize with Elinor's plight as she progresses towards her personal liberation, overcoming cancer and self-doubt, surrounded by those who admire her candour. "You always fall on your feet", says one friend; "You are the only person I know", says another, "who can continue to have her cake and eat it." However, in delineating Elinor's confused responses to art and life, and in her sketching in of the shades of love and lust which obstruct the view, Penelope Farmer comes close at times to creating a modern-day Lucy Honeychurch.

## On the slant

### Mark Casserley

GEOFFREY CUSH  
God Help the Queen  
148pp. Abacus. £8.95.  
0 349 10670 3  
PATRICK GALE  
Kansas In August  
140pp. Century. £9.95.  
0 7126 1534 2

In Geoffrey Cush's first novel, *God Help the Queen*, the year is 2003, and Britain, under the successor of "Norman St. Margaret", is swarming with US military personnel. The apt Queen has become a privatized irrelevance, and her unemployed subjects, whose bread has been converted into shares in fictitious companies, wait aimlessly in huge urban dumping-grounds. The active powers here are Edward Vane, a Palace official; Peter Pounce, a former schoolteacher who runs a boys' community in a disused mill on Regent's Park Canal; and Pounce's sexual rival, Major Mac Garbo, Liaison Officer to the British Government.

Vane is desperate: his lover's son is dying of leukaemia, and he attempts to raise the vast sum of money needed for treatment, first by using Pounce's boys to push cocaine, and then by persuading the Queen to back a Mosaic party. He hopes that a frightened government will buy him off, and he and Pounce blackmail Oarbo to this end, using his seduction of Damon, a teenager from the North, in whom Pounce is also interested. The new party fails, but the money is forthcoming nevertheless; Pounce gets Damon into bed, before they are both murdered; the existing order is left unchanged, except that US Army convoys no longer use the Mall on Sundays.

*Kansas In August*, Patrick Gale's third novel, concerns itself, by contrast, with the emotional crises of the main characters, and his intensified version of the present – mugging, urban squalor, public-sector strikes – remains background to this. Hilary has been trying to make a career as a dancer, and fills in time as a teacher; he rescues an abandoned baby, and is in the process of adopting it, when it is taken away by the Department of Health and Social Security. Hilary's lover, Rufus, is a failed musician earning money from piano lessons and his sexual services, while claiming benefit. Hilary's sister, Henry, a psychiatrist charged with making her patients ready for the outside world, adopts a new identity, "Sandy", and begins an affair with Rufus. As the couple prepare to leave for France, where Henry has a new job, Hilary is knocked down by a lorry, which, with thumping irony, crushes his legs. The action of both books takes place in London, but there are other similarities: in each case, a great building is falling into disuse and disappear (Buckingham Palace, and Princess Marina's Hospital); both have as a main character a sexually adventurous but emotionally uninvolved woman doctor, while at the same time homosexuality takes centre stage. More importantly, in both books there is an uneasy authority: the United States for Cush, the DHSS for Gale, and this is part of a setting that is related to, but aslant from, contemporary life – the consistency of vision which would create a genuine dystopia is missing.

These rather similar worlds are put to very different uses. Cush's book is the more ambitious; its satirical projection into the future is closer in tone to Angus Wilson's *The Old Man at the Zoo* than *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and it might be argued that it has too much of response to trends in recent politics, and too little of historical vision. Some of the dissonant narrative elements (the high-level political discussions, for example) are just not credible. These are matched by more promising material, however: the Queen's life at the Palace, with a lady-in-waiting who is converting her to Buddhism, has elements of *Mervyn Poole*. The chaotic, rubbish-filled, violent streets of London are something Gale's characters have to struggle with, and the detail of their passage through this world is the most effective thing in his book – their emotional predicament is less gripping. In both novels, in fact, characters and style have a perfunctory air, as though every thing had been leached out by the squalid and menacing settings.

## Victorian values exposed

### Julian Symons

DAVID GRYLLE  
The Paradox of Gissing  
226pp. Allen and Unwin. £20.  
0 04 800081 7

David Grylls begins with a fireworks display of paradoxes in Gissing. Contempt/compassion for the poor, envy/disdain for the rich, feminism blended with misogyny, arrogance about his own talent joined with disgust at failure to see it fully: these are all recognizable to anyone who has dipped more than a toe into the novels, but they are set out more clearly here than in any other study. Throughout his career Gissing struggled to find some ultimate realities about the nature of society, the truths or deceptions of religion, the qualities of civilization. Really for him was always the sum of his own confusions, and the substance of his novels is the attempt to make them coherent. This was difficult particularly because the confusions were those of his life as well as his art, and the life tended to get in the way of the work so that his central characters often seem to believe as Gissing might have done or wished to do in a given situation. The minor figures similarly are frequently energized by ideas that have caught the author's attention, and attracted a kind of half-belief not excluding doubt, rather than by actions appropriate to their characters. As Dr Grylls says in his witty conclusion, there is a very good reason why Gissing excels at capturing weakness and doubt, and realizing characters who are embodied contradictions. "The figure he was stalking was himself."

The central paradox of Gissing is, however, one not directly noticed here: that his aspirations did not fit his gifts. He looked longingly at

a life of scholarship, yearned for an unattainable and largely illusory classical past, and transferred these romantic feelings into his relations with women. In his life the results were two disastrous marriages, and the alliance with Gabrielle Fleury that brought considerable though not unalloyed happiness to his last five years. In literary terms his romanticism was responsible for passages of woozy sentimentality, like some of those between Piers Orwin and Irene in *The Crown of Life* (begun just after meeting Gabrielle), for the dismal sixteenth-century historical romance *Vernilda*, left uncompleted at his death, and above all for his last published work, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, professedly written by a man in his fifties who has come into a legacy enabling him to retire to a Devonshire cottage. Ryecroft's reflections, reminiscences and speculations were regarded by Edwardian critics as the peak of Gissing's achievement, "the fullest expression of the poetry within him" as the TLS reviewer said. Today the eulogies of rural life seem commonplace or tedious, the speculations are expressed more forcefully in Gissing's diaries and correspondence, and the whimsical-historical-antique-laid-deckle-etched style that overlays it all makes the book read like a blend of a Robert Lynd essay and J. C. Squire in his Salomon Engle incarnation, a truly horrifying combination.

Gissing's style in his finest work hardly exists: it is one of his virtues that in the sequence of books beginning in 1887 with *Thyrza* and ending a decade later with *The Whirlpool* he set down an unrelenting opposition to the things he hated about Victorian Britain in the plainest, clearest prose. They included every kind of commercial activity (only tolerable when pursued by those with an "unmercantile soul"), cheap newspapers, most weekly jour-

nalism, advertising, every aspect of life informed by the profit motive, all the things in fact that made Britain such an agreeable country for the broad-bottomed middle class. Gissing's writing during this decade has a power and intensity equal to that of any Victorian novelist. The masterpieces are *New Grub Street* and his most savage attack on Victorian commercialism, *In the Year of Jubilee*, but *The Odd Women*, *The Nether World* and *Born in Exile* are almost as good. Of these novels only the first is justly famous as a view of the lower levels of the literary life, but the others all contain memorable characters like the sadistic Clementine Peckover (*The Nether World*) who eats sausages with a knife and meditates gleefully on the fun she will have in tormenting a young girl servant; the Peachey sisters of *In the Year of Jubilee*, "in physical conflict, vilifying each other like the female spawn of Whitechapel"; and Gwendolyn Peake of *Born in Exile*, a central character who for once transcends his origins in Gissing's life. Above all the scholar *unexcelled* in describing the London he detested, putting down the details of houses, shops, pubs, streets in Brixton and Canberwell, Brumdesbury and Pinner, with marvellous exactness. *Born in Exile* and *New*

*Grub Street* receive detailed analysis from Grylls who, intent to make his points about paradox in Gissing, also gives much more attention to the clumsy early novels than literary grounds warrant.

Gissing's last books, written when his circumstances were easier and his life happier, show his inability to handle characters living comfortable lives. *The Crown of Life* has some good scenes set within the unfortunate central romance, like that in which Irene breaks her engagement to the worldly Arnold Jacks, but like *Our Friend the Charlatan* it is a novel uncertain of its objectives, lacking altogether the intensity of the work done in the great decade. The limitation even of the memorable novels is that a style so plain, a realism so determinedly literal, can only take writer and reader so far. Henry James, in a finely perceptive short piece about the novels, viewed Gissing as "the authority" on the lower and lowest middle class, praised his saturation in the material he used, but deprecated an almost complete lack of form. "It is form above all that is talent, and if Mr Gissing's were proportionate to his knowledge . . . we should have a larger force to reckon with." That is the limitation: but still, the achievement was unique.

## Novel inquiries

### John Mullan

GEOFFREY DAY  
From Fiction to the Novel  
223pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £17.95.  
0 7102 0911 8  
EVE TAYLOR  
Scepticism, Society and the Eighteenth-Century Novel  
273pp. Macmillan. £27.50.  
0 333 40014 3

*Eighteenth-Century Novel* is more ambitious and less enlightening. It begins from the same recognition that "the novel" was not a self-evident genre for most of the eighteenth century, and argues that the precedents for the fictions of Defoe, Richardson, Fielding and Sterne are to be found outside literature in a so-called "eighteenth-century sceptical tradition". The attempt to understand the pretensions of fiction alongside philosophy's projects of moral and social inquiry is rightly part of the "sociology" of a literary form which this book declares itself to be. However, in criticizing a model of novels as expressions of "middle-class" ideology, Taylor produces just as simplified a paradigm. "Scepticism" is made to embrace writers as diverse as Locke, Mandeville and Shaftesbury – a disabling generalization of the term. And then such philosophy is taken as a privileged explanation of the fiction by means of assertions that come just too easily: "Locke is the key to the narrative design of Defoe's novels"; "Fielding uses Hume's doctrines of probability and belief." The book presumes the "direct causal influences" from philosophy to fiction that are rejected in its introduction. This produces some suspect connections (Shaftesbury's influence on Richardson?), but also blinds it to an implication of its own, often acute, analyses of particular fictions: that novels could make better sense of the world than philosophy. They might have been, as Geoffrey Day shows, defensive of their novelty; but they gripped, as well as bemused, their readers because they had powers which other kinds of polite literature lacked.

In the eighteenth century, novels were novelities – boasts of their special powers and insecure about their suspect reputations. They once seemed loosened from precedent – innovating beyond recognized moral consolation, yet too anxious for respectability to offer coherent social criticism. Once, indeed, they had in common most of all the habit of disavowing the label of "novel", suggestive as it was of vulgar, even immoral, excitements. It is from an observation of this self-denial that both these histories of eighteenth-century fiction begin. Both seek to recapture what was the moral as well as aesthetic uncertainty of a genre with which we are too familiar; both seek to recover the impact to the eighteenth century of the newness of novels.

Geoffrey Day's *From Fiction to the Novel* is an account of the definitions offered by eighteenth-century novelists of the nature of their fictions, and a compilation of the variously bemused or censorious responses of contemporary readers and critics. It is a report from the archive rather than a work of literary criticism, and is best at showing not just how novels were understood, but the ways in which they were not understood. Much of the book is quotation – a record of the vocabulary available to make sense of this new cultural phenomenon. Sometimes this can seem excessive: we are given a 10,000-word slab of James Beattie's "On Fable and Romance", perhaps too much space for an essay significant for the failure of its taxonomy and the predictability of its moralism. But then it gets highlighted precisely because the period of the "rise of the novel" saw few such sustained attempts in subjection to the authority of literary criticism. And even if anthology sometimes takes the place of argument in Day's book, his collection does usefully correct some of the assumptions about the coherence of a genre with which histories of the novel have worked. It demonstrates not merely the confusion of readers, but how that confusion conditioned the aspirations of the novelists. The new fiction of the eighteenth century was always having to justify itself, and its pretensions to moral instructiveness determined its development. *From Fiction to the Novel* does enough to show that a history of expectation and reception, for which it provides some of the material, must be a part of any coherent history of the novel.

John Mullan's *Scepticism, Society and the*

hero explains in his post-bomb dialect, "That's why I findy come to writing all this down. Thinking on what the idea of us myt be."

Writings about the bomb have their antecedents in chivalric prophecy. Dowling devotes an entire chapter to apocalypse and revelation. It is perhaps his desire to trace this lineage that leads him to skirt the issue of meaning and middle three important issues which can only be compared and related if their distinctiveness is observed. The three are the biblical apocalypse (the Day of Judgment), the Nazi extermination programme, and the Big Bang itself. Dowling illustrates his study with eight of Dürer's famous engravings of the Book of Revelation, which he takes as a text alongside *Gravety's Rainbow*. The problem, however, is that Revelation does not depict a nuclear cataclysm. Dowling's error is clearest when he quotes the apocryphal Apocalypse of Paul:

And I saw other men and women covered in dust, and their faces were like blood, and they were in a pit of fire and brimstone, and they were running in a river of fire, and I asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said to me: They are those who have committed the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Dowling states that "the scene could have come directly from the streets of Hiroshima". But it couldn't. Some of those whose faces were like blood on August 6, 1945, had doubtless committed sins of iniquity; others had not. The Punishment was inflicted upon guilty and innocent alike with complete indifference to personal culpability. By contrast the biblical and the apocryphal, the Apocalypse of Paul, is full of meaning; indeed it delivers an awesome, retrospective meaning to the whole of a person's life. The paradox of deterrence is that nuclear weapons are not supposed to be used, if they are they will have been pointless, their consequence a little end; not a day of judgment but the opposite, elimination by a misjudgment.

Can one write about such meaningfulness? One work that attempts to is Beckett's *Endgame*, which opens with four brief laughs and the word "Finished". Dowling does not discuss the word "Finished", although it includes the line, "I say myself that the earth is extinguished, the fulfilment never saw it lit." The play addresses the fulfilment of meaning, and the final sterility of purpose. Dowling is right, that this cannot be all there is to say. It is, however, the abyss that confronts all disaster writing.

### Anthony Barnett

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239pp. Macmillan. £27.50.  
0 333 39817 3

David Dowling's *Fictions of Nuclear Disaster* is a survey of books written under the threat of the bomb. More than 250 works, including some earlier disaster writing, are mentioned, in what is sometimes a cataract of references. Dowling starts with H. G. Wells – who, in 1913, grasped the possibilities inherent in the "atomic degeneration in the heavy elements" – and attempts to bring the study up to date.

The survey is not chronologically organized. Dowling does not discern any evolution in the body of work he analyses. Instead he attempts a thematic appraisal. He considers the figure of the scientist, especially the "mad scientist"; he brings together descriptions of a post-nuclear world, and in another chapter assesses the way disaster is imagined. He discerns two basic strands: scientific fiction with an emphasis on informed speculation; and the more surreal response, whether satirical or apocalyptic. The best writing, he argues, "bridges" the two cultures implied here; and to his postmillennial chapter he considers what he terms "Two Exemplary Fictions": Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* and Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*.

Dowling argues that it is trite to say that the reality of complete nuclear devastation is beyond fiction. He criticizes Jonathan Schell for his suggestion in *The Fate of the Earth* that art, with its claim to timelessness, is undermined by the threat of extermination. On the contrary, Dowling concludes, art is essential in the face of such a possibility. A major part of his argument is that fictions about nuclear disaster may help humanity develop its imagination to the point of defusing its ultimate weapons.

But if Dowling is convincing about the need for and importance of "nuclear art", his own approach is not entirely satisfactory. At the centre of his book is the idea of an end to meaning: it is indeed a kind of paradox to try to describe an end to all meaning in language. The evident strain in a book like *Riddley Walker*, for example, is its necessary naivety. The

## In the hands of the undertakers

### Patricia Craig

SAM HANNA BELL  
Across the Narrow Sea  
299pp. Blackstaff. £10.95.  
0 8546 4077 6

Sam Hanna Bell's new novel opens in 1608, the year after English and Scottish settlers began to pour into Ulster to take over the lands of the native Irish who had fought on the losing side in the battle of Kinsale. The forfeited lands were parcelled out to "undertakers", who promptly established settlements and went about the business of administration, while the ex-owners and their retainers, in many cases, stayed around to ensure that the incomers didn't have too easy a time of it. The planter families, forced to defend themselves and their new property, experienced danger and instability from the outset. Here you have the origins of the "siege mentality" that assumed such prominence in the Ulster Protestant psyche; while Catholic Ulster sustained itself on a powerful sense of injustice and persecution.

*Across the Narrow Sea* begins with a quarrel between a cantankerous Scottish laird and his younger son, Neil Gilchrist, who immediately heads for London and the Court of King James. He is diverted before he has gone very far out of Ayrshire, and ends up in Ravara, Co

Down, where he falls in with a peasant family named MacIlveen who are separating themselves from a high-handed landlord. The author's first point is that few of the ordinary families arriving in Northern Ireland, where the prospect of a rewarding life was held out to them, understood the rights and wrongs of the dispossession issue, or felt themselves to be fit objects for native hostility. "If the land's fit for working we're fit to work it": this was the cunning, pragmatic attitude.

The "undertaker" in charge of Ravara – once owned by the Gaelic MacCartans, a tribe not entirely dispossessed, though considerably diminished – is a Scotsman named Kenneth Echlin whose house, Rathard, is one of those destined to go up in flames in the native Irish uprising of 1641. We learn as much from the novel's sole reference to a future event; Bell's primary concern is to show a planter community in the process of putting down roots, building, engaging in commerce, cultivating the land. Neil Gilchrist, a one-time law student, is set to tending the woodlands of Ravara: a felicitous appointment. Social ambitions, danger, conflict, personal antagonisms, intrusions for romance – all have a place in the energetic narrative, in which all the characters are constantly on the go.

While the MacIlveens embody the planter propensity for setting to work with a will, and producing results, there are other, rogue Scots whose viciousness is as much a threat to the

surface of a reservoir crack open in the sunlight – an indulgence which could well have been omitted. She is ready to end her journey to nowhere, but without any sense of optimism. Her stories about the false cheer of happy endings and so, looking forward, does she:

I am retreating because I am not a story. There is no controlled shape – beyond the circle my journey away and back will describe. That is a freedom. My life goes on, shapeless, raggedly, from day to day. I don't know what will happen. But my life goes on.

Women get a rougher ride than men in this original treatment of the feminist predicament – how to be a good mother and still preserve an independent life – but Jane Rogers is unusual among feminist writers in that she spurns the usual clichés and propagandist tracts which limit the work of so many novelists in this genre. There are no diatribes here! Her style is terse and ruthlessly grabby; her attitude is one of implacable honesty.

Jane Clardam, Mervyn Jones and Ann Schlee are the judges of the 1987 David Higham Prize for Fiction, entries for which must be submitted by July 31. The prize, of £1,000, is awarded annually to a first published work of fiction by a citizen of the Commonwealth, the Republic of Ireland, Pakistan or South Africa, and is administered by the Book Trust.

## To the north

### Miranda Seymour

JANE ROGERS  
The Ice Is Singing  
153pp. Faber. £9.95.  
0 571 14772 0

Jane Rogers is not the first writer to have used a long car journey to suggest suspended time or a period in purgatory, but she bestows a welcome freshness on the familiar by an original narrative trick of juxtaposing universal anecdote with self-interrogation.

The story, or rather stories, emerge from the consciousness of Marion, a woman of unspecified age who has abandoned her baby twins with her sister and started driving north on a bleak February night. She has no sense of where she is going or what she wants:

She didn't want. Not at all. No intention of reaching journey's end, thank you. No interest in peace and freedom. No desire for tranquillity or angel chicks.

Trapped in motion like a rat on a wheel. You can only move or stop moving. And the only place you can arrive at by moving is somewhere else where you must either stop or move on.

The novel is presented as a journal of her thoughts as she drives – we're left to assume

that she must be recording them to an endless tape – and of the stories she tells herself to keep her own fears at bay. Each of the four stories, deftly placed to vary the rhythm of the monologue, emerges as a reflection of the woman's own insecurity, her concern for her children, her private obsessions. It is these starkly realistic little tales which give the book its edgy brilliance.

Each story is of a conventional domestic tragedy. A father learns that his adored little daughter isn't his and that the only way he'll ever get near her again is by peering, like a perversity, through the school playground fence. A daughter whose life has been sucked away in caring for a tyrannical invalid mother lives only for the old woman's death, and when it comes, has nothing left to live for. A woman kills the throat of her retarded child to save him from the violence of her brutal boyfriend. A girl who desperately wants a child gets pregnant, and grows obsessed with the idea of a monstrous insect with glowing wings, trapped and fluttering in her flesh, a dream turned nightmare.

The stories are Marion's way of breaking the ice which has hardened over her mind, turning her into a state of deadly apathy. The final state is, a bit crudely, externalized towards the end of the book when she watches the red

John Mullan







# TLS Listings

A comprehensive weekly selection  
of new and forthcoming books received by the TLS

The TLS Listings provides full publication details of those books received each week by the TLS which seem to fall within the main interests of our readers. Children's books, foreign-language books and paperback reprints of recent works are not, however, included. Publishers are asked to ensure that they let us have all the necessary information, including price and publication date.

## Anthropology

Frazer, J. G. *The Golden Bough: A study in magic and religion, abridged edition*. Macmillan. 750pp. £6.95 (paperback). 0 333 43410 7.

## Archaeology

Conrad, Graham. *African Civilizations: Precolonial cities and States in tropical Africa: An archaeological perspective*. Cambridge UP. 250pp. £25.50 (hardcover), £7.95 (paperback). 0 521 26666 1 (h.c.). 0 521 31992 7 (pb.). 14/87.

Pigbill, Morin. *Laconia: Iconography of the 6th Century BC* (Monograph 12). Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, illus. by Oshon. 10 Chris Road (OX1 3TU). 127pp. illus. £20 (paperback). 0 947816 12 7.

## Art

Gawle, Grey Derek. *1911: An appreciation*. Quercus. 150pp. plates. £25. 0 7043 2598 5. 2/87.

Hewitt, V. L., and J. M. Keyworth. *As Clouds as Gold: 300 years of British bank note design*. British Museum. 100pp. illus. £15. 0 7141 10668 5. 10/87.

Messer, Thomas M. *19th Century*. Thames and Hudson. 120pp. plates. £12.95. 0 500 08027 5. 2/78.

Stallton, Lindsay, and Christopher White. *Drawing in England from Hilliard to Hogarth*. British Museum. 235pp. £14.95 (paperback). 0 7141 1629 7.

Werner, Alfred. *Duly*. Thames and Hudson. 120pp. plates. £12.95. 0 500 08026 7. 6/78.

## Biography, letters and diaries

Beckson, Karl Arthur. *Symons: A life*. Oxford: Clarendon. 402pp. illus. £35. 0 19 812882 7. 2/78.

Doswell, Silvester Gordon. *edited by John Seymour*. The Book of Doswell: Autobiography of a gypsy (1st pub. 1970). Penguin. 202pp. illus. £3.95 (paperback). 0 14 00356 7. 3/78.

Camus, Albert. *translated by Hugh Leitch*. American Journals. New York: Penguin. 157pp. \$15.95. 0 913729 68 X. 15/78.

Chamberlain, Brenda. *afterword by Joseph Jones*. The race (1st pub. 1962). Bridgwater: Poetry Wales / Seren. 230pp. illus. £3.95 (paperback). 0 907476 65 1. 20/78.

Cranston, Maurice Jean-Jacques. *The early life and work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1712-1754*. Penguin. 582pp. illus. £5.95 (paperback). 0 14 053232 4. 5/78.

Giles, Miep, and Alison Leslie Gold. *Anne Frank Remembered*. Bantam. 201pp. illus. £10.95. 0 593 01283 8. 16/78.

Morehead, Kerens. *Sounds Like Skipper*. Holder and Stoughton. 160pp. illus. £9.95. 0 340 39154 5. 17/87.

McLellan, David Karl Marx. *His life and thought* (1st pub. 1973). Macmillan. 500pp. illus. £7.95 (paperback). 0 333 44541 4. 13/87.

O'Brien, George. *The Village of Llanglo*. Llanglo, Gigginstown, Mullingar, County Westmeath, Ireland. 151pp. £10.95. 0 946640 18 1. 2/78.

Pedrona, Cormen Navarro. *Imeldio Marcos*. Widenfeld and Nicolson. 230pp. illus. £10.95. 0 247 79207 3. 6/87.

Rineer, Iuliet. *translated by Michael Hulse*. Prison Journal. Macmillan. 151pp. £9.95. 0 333 44668 1. 2/78.

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Rynn, John. *Remembering How We Stood: Bohemian Dublin in the mid-century* (1st pub. 1979). Lilliput, Gigginstown, Mullingar, County Westmeath, Ireland. 160pp. £3.95 (paperback). 0 946640 17 3. 7/87.

Schoenbaum, S. William Shakespeare: A compact documentary life, revised edition. Oxford UP. 384pp. £9.95 (paperback). 0 19 50161 0. 2/78.

Shoop, David M. *edited by Howard Jobson*. The Matrices in China 1927-1928: A contemporary journal (Archival Books). Harnden, CT: Shoe String. 150pp. \$19.50. 0 208 02146 9. 6/87.

## Business

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## Classics

Martin, *edited by J. P. Sullivan and Peter Wigham*. Epigrams of Martial. Englished by Divers Hands. Berkeley: California UP. 609pp. \$58 (hardcover). 0 520 04240 9 (h.c.). 0 520 04241 7 (pb.). 25/87.

## Economics

Gree, Francis, and Bab Suttcliffe. *The Profit System: The economics of capitalism*. Penguin / Pelican. 389pp. £5.95 (paperback). 0 14 02216 4. 3/78.

Kilby, Peter, editor. *Quantity and Quality: Essays in U.S. economic history*. Middlesex, CT: Wesleyan UP. dist. by Harper and Row. 423pp. \$40. 0 8195 5154 0. 15/78.

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Taylor, Talbot J., and Deborah Cameron. *Analyzing Conversation: Rules and units in the structure of talk* (Language Communication Library, vol 9). Oxford: Pergamon. 169pp. £23.50/£13.5. 0 08 03362 1. 3/87.

**Literature and criticism**

Calder, Anne. *Byron (Open Guides to Literature)*. Open UP. 97pp. £15 (hardcover). £4.50 (paperback). 0 333 15086 1 (h.c.). 0 333 15095 0 (pb.). 14/78.

Collins, Wilkie. *Illustrated by A. Forester*. *Blind Love*. Methuen, NY: Dover, dist. by Constable. 312pp. illus. £5.50 (paperback). 0 486 25189 6. 3/87.

Cromley-Holland, Kevin. *editor*. *Illustrated by Alan Howard*. *Northern Lights: Legends, sagas and folk tales*. Faber. 228pp. illus. £4.95 (paperback). 0 571 14899 5. 2/78.

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Kierman, Kevin S. *The Thorkell Transcripts of "Beowulf"* (Anglistica, vol 25). Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger. 155pp. DKR15.

Miles, Rosalind. *The Female Form: Women writers and the conquest of the novel*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 227pp. £14.95. 0 7102 1008 6. 9/78.

Owen, Colin. *editor*. *Family Circles: Maria Edgeworth's "Castle Rackrent"* (Appraisal Series). Dublin: Wolfhound. 127pp. £17.50. 0 389 20735 7. 4/78.

**FIFTY YEARS ON**

The TLS of July 24, 1937, carried a review of Louis MacNeice's *Out of the Picture*: A play to two acts, from which these extracts are taken:

The new poetic dramas make the critic ask questions about how character ought to be treated. Not long ago Mr W. H. Auden wrote: "Drama is not suited to the analysis of character; which is the province of the novel. Dramatic characters are simplified; easily recognizable and 'over life-size'." He himself at first delineated after the manner of cartoons, but in his latest piece, *The Ascent of F6*, essayed fuller personages. Mr MacNeice, one feels, tries to work by earlier Auden-esque theory, and in so far as he does so, hampers his inclination. A true drama of human character does not involve miniature of "characterization". Blake, writing about Chaucer's *Plagiars*, who for him exhibited the